

TB

PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

By JOHN HUGHES

Final Shooting Script

June 23, 1987

1 SKY. CLOUDS. DAY

A low, heavy, winter sky. Dark, pregnant clouds too fat with snow to move. A white speck distinguishes itself from the dirty grey of the clouds as it falls to CAMERA. It passes CAMERA and we recognize it as a solitary SNOWFLAKE. CAMERA PANS the snowflake down to see the City of Chicago thousands of feet below. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. SIDE ANGLE

We FOLLOW the snowflake down. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. DOWN ANGLE

Above the snowflake. Five thousand feet. A commercial airliner passes beneath. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. UP ANGLE

The snowflake has distanced itself from the clouds. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. SIDE ANGLE

The winds gently redirect the snowflake. It begins to drift CAMERA LEFT. DISSOLVE TO...

CU SNOWFLAKE. DOWN ANGLE

The new course the snowflake is on finds it travelling north. 2500 feet. Over the North Side of the city. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. SIDE ANGLE

CAMERA pulls with the snowflake to see the skyline of Chicago behind it. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. DOWN ANGLE

1000 feet above the northern suburbs. The snowflake sails over the commuter rail tracks as a train passes. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. SIDE ANGLE

Descending through the bare treetops. MOVING CAMERA LEFT. DISSOLVE TO...

CU. SNOWFLAKE. DOWN ANGLE

The snowflake floats over a backyard, the slate roof of a solid upper-middle class home, across a front yard, over a cobblestone street. A car passes beneath.

CU SNOWFLAKE. FRONT ANGLE

CAMERA MOVES WITH the snowflake as it drifts over another house, through bare tree branches and down to rest on the frozen lawn. The first snowflake of the first storm of the season. Behind the snowflake we see a large two-story red brick house. LAST TITLE. END MUSIC. CUT ON THE JARRING BLEAT OF AN AUTOMOBILE.

2 EXT. NEW YORK CITY. 58TH AND MADISON. DAY

The edge of winter. Late November. Thanksgiving week. Tuesday. The sky is low and dark. The sidewalks are clogged with pedestrians bundled against the chill wind blowing down the avenue. Shoulder-to-shoulder stampede of independant, socially incompatable human units returning to their domiciles after a day's work. Traffic is slow and tangled. Within the protective confines of their rolling pieces of territory, the drivers are more expressive and bold than the foot soldiers on the sidewalks.

3 EXT. STREET CORNER

A gangly, emaciated Middle-Eastern WOMAN dressed in a Santa Claus suit is chanting a miserable rendition of "DECK THE HALLS" in hopes of garnering a hand-out.

4 EXT. ANOTHER STREET CORNER

A young MAN of unspecified origin is hustling knit ski-masks.

5 EXT. ANOTHER CORNER

A cop is frisking a young BOY against a store, barely noticed by the current passerbys.

6 EXT. MID-BLOCK

A SALVATION ARMY BAND is playing "COME ALL YE FAITHFUL." The music is barely perceptable against the drone of the traffic.

7 EXT. SIDEWALK

A WOMAN in a fur coat is walking shoulder-to-shoulder with a DERELICT.

8 EXT. BUS STOP

A PORTLY WOMAN and her two CHILDREN are waiting for the bus. She's holding a boxed fresh tom turkey.

9 EXT. STORE FRONT

A gaudy electronics store. Every manner of consumer electronic gadget surrounding a ghastly plastic turkey. A large, colorful banner announces a THANKSGIVING DAY SALE.

10 EXT. GM BUILDING

The white marble tower dwarfing the thousands crossing it's plaza.

11 CU PIAGET WATCH

On a man's wrist. It reads 4:56. A shirt and jacket cuff slowly slide down over the watch.

CU SHEET OF PAPER

Folded in thirds. A man's hand discreetly opens the top fold to reveal a travel itinerary. His index finger scans a line stopping on...DEPART NEW YORK 6:00 PM MID-CENTRAL 105.

CU. NEAL PAGE

A handsome, urbane man, impeccably dressed, perfectly coiffed. A successful man deeply in control of his life. His eyes shift from the itinerary to the room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY

A cold, stark conference room. Marble table, harsh cove lighting, black leather, high-back chairs. Neal and an older man, JOHN DOLE are on one side of the table. Across from him are three middle-aged MEN. Dark suits, white shirts, dark ties. The chairman is in the middle, distinguished from the others only by his position at the head of the table and the color in his tie. He's studying a series of ad layouts.

CU AD

It's a slick color comp of a lipstick print ad.

CU NEAL

He looks at his watch again. He's nervous about the time.

CU MAN

He's staring at the ad. Can't make up his mind.

CU JOHN

He looks at Neal.

CU NEAL

He looks at John. Shakes his head in disgust. He taps his watch and mouths, "I GOTTA GO!"

CU MAN

His eyes shift from the end to Neal and John.

HIS POV

Neal is silently insisting that he has to leave. John is silently stating that he understands but the matter is out of their hands. Two mimes in a hurry.

CU MAN

He returns to the ad.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Neal looks at his watch and leans back in his chair. He's annoyed. The chairman sets the ad down. He looks across the table, opens his mouth to speak. John and Neal lean forward in anticipation of a decision. A pause and the chairman shuts his mouth and picks up the ad again.

12

INT. LOBBY. ELEVATOR BANK. DAY

Luxury and style. Leather and stone. Neal's carrying a briefcase and a two suiter. He's wearing his overcoat. John is without luggage or his overcoat.

NEAL

Two solid hours of staring at the layouts to decide to reconvene after the holidays for a fresh look at the material? They're selling cosmetics, not curing cancer!

He sets down his briefcase and presses the DOWN button on the elevator bank.

JOHN

A lot of their cosmetics may well cause cancer.

Neal unzips his trousers, reaches his hand in the fly and carefully straighten his shirt tails.

NEAL

You're not going to the airport?

JOHN

What's the point of breaking your balls rushing for a six o'clock plane? Why don't you go out with me on the eight fifteen?

NEAL

I promised Susan I'd be home by nine.

JOHN

What difference does a couple hours make?

NEAL

Under normal circumstances, none. But considering the state of affairs at my house these days, it makes all the difference.

JOHN

The six is a pain in the ass. Call and tell Susan it was delayed.

NEAL

I can't make that one work anymore.

The elevator BELL SOUNDS. He picks up his briefcase. He realizes something.

NEAL

I left my gloves in Walt's office.

He makes a move to return to the office.

NEAL

Forget it. If you can bring them back with you...

John nods.

NEAL

I don't need gloves. I get in the elevator, go to the limosine, go to the airport and I'm home.

The elevator doors open. Neal steps in.

JOHN

Have a good holiday.

NEAL

That's a contradiction in terms.

The doors close.

A13 INT. ELEVATOR

Neal's confident that he'll make his plane as he looks at his watch. He notices a tiny smudge on his briefcase. He licks the tip of his thumb and wipes away the smudge. He straightens up and prepares to exit the elevator.

13 INT. ELEVATOR DOORS

Neal's elevator doors open to reveal a large crowd moving past.

CU NEAL

Thundering disappointment

INT. LOBBY

The elevator crowd moves into the lobby. Neal cranes his neck above the crowd. He curls his lip.

HIS POV

14 INT. LOBBY REVOLVING DOORS. DAY

Through the crowd we catch a glimpse of an old steamer trunk jammed in the revolving doors. An unseen person is struggling with it. WE DON'T SEE HIS FACE.

CU NEAL

He curses under his breath. He looks at his watch again.

15 EXT. GM BUILDING PLAZA. NEAL. DAY

Neal squeezes out of a conventional door and hurries across the plaza to a waiting limosine. The driver gets out and opens the hood. A plume of steam rises from the overheated engine.

16 EXT. STREET CORNER. DAY

A crowd of people waiting for buses and taxis. Neal slips through and takes a frantic look down the avenue.

HIS POV

A sea of occupied cabs.

CU NEAL -

He curses the situation and exits into the street.

17 EXT. STREET DAY

Neal slips between the cars as he crosses the street.

TB
REV: 2/6/87

6A.

18 EXT. 58TH STREET. DAY

Neal hurries down the street, weaving through pedestrians, throwing an arm up and letting out a sharp whistle whenever he spots what he thinks is an available cab.

CU 'CAB LIGHT'

It goes on.

CU. NEAL

He spots the cab. He throws his arm up.

NEAL

TAXI!

HIS POV

The cab he's hailing starts to move to the curb.

19 CU. MAN ON THE STREET. DAY

A BROKER in his mid-20's spots the light. He whistles.

EXT. 58TH. NEAL

Neal starts for the cab.

EXT. 58TH. BROKER

He sees Neal moving for the cab. It's a race.

HIS POV

Neal dashes down the sidewalk, running for the cab.

EXT. 58TH BROKER

He breaks for the cab.

EXT. 58TH NEAL

He charges down the sidewalk and cuts between parked cars. The cab is his. As he makes the cut between the cars, he tumbles OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. STREET. CAB

The Broker jumps in the cab and slams the door.

EXT. STREET. NEAL

Neal picks himself up, curses his soiled palms and checks his wardrobe for damage. A tiny patch of grit on his knee. He brushes it away and turns to see what he tripped over.

The steamer trunk that caused the delay in the revolving doors sits innocently at the curb between two parked cars.

EXT. STREET. NEAL

He draws back and kicks the trunk.

20 EXT. PARK AVENUE. DAY

More traffic. People hailing cabs. Arms waving like palm trees in a typhoon.

EXT. PARK AVENUE. LAWYER

A middle-aged LAWYER in a dark suit and camel hair overcoat raises an arm to hail a cab.

HIS POV

An available cab begins to edge toward the curb. It's one lane of traffic away.

21 EXT. 58TH STREET AND PARK. DAY

Neal hurries along the sidewalk rubbing at the nasty scuff mark on his briefcase, muttering to himself. He reaches the corner and glances at his watch.

CU WATCH

It reads 5:11

CU. NEAL

He's furious and panicked. He scans the street.

HIS POV

The cab the lawyer hailed pulls up to the curb.

CU. NEAL

He sees the cab light.

CU. LIGHT

Glowing white and free.

EXT. STREET

The man who hailed the cab steps into the street and grabs the handle to enter the cab. Neal rushes up.

NEAL

I realize that this is your cab
but I'm desperately late for an
airplane. Could I appeal to your
good nature and ask that you let
me have it?

MAN

I don't have a good nature.
Excuse me.

The man opens the cab door.

NEAL

Could I offer you fifty for it?

The man hesitates. The CABBIE blows his horn.

22 INT. CAB. DAY

An irritated young LUNK bellows out the window.

CABBIE

COME ON!

22A EXT. STREET. DAY

The man considers his offer.

MAN

Fifty bucks?

CABBIE (OC)

SHAKE IT OR LOSE IT!

NEAL

Fifty bucks.

MAN

Someone who'll pay fifty bucks
for a cab will certainly pay
seventy five.

Neal glares at the man. Behind him, a figure in a navy blue polyester overcoat drags the now familiar steamer trunk, a briefcase and suitcase past.

NEAL

Fifty bucks.

MAN

Someone who'll pay fifty bucks
for a cab will certainly pay
seventy five.

Neal glares at the man. Behind him, a figure in a navy blue polyester overcoat drags the now familiar steamer trunk, a briefcase and suitcase past.

NEAL
(firm)
Not necessarily.

The man shrugs and makes a move to get into the cab.

NEAL
Fine. Seventy five.

MAN
Let's make it an even hundred.

Neal glares at him.

MAN
You're the one in the hurry.

The man has a point. Neal looks at his watch.

CU WATCH

It reads 5:15

23 EXT. STREET. DAY

Neal reaches for his wallet. The man moves away from the cab to receive his money.

23D EXT. STREET. DAY

Neal counts out a hundred dollars in twenties.

NEAL
(to the man)
You're a thief.

MAN
Close. I'm an attorney.

The cab pulls away from the curb. Neal hands over the money.

NEAL
(sarcastic)
Happy holidays.

MAN
(folding the cash)
This'll help.

Neal turns to find the cab gone. He snaps his head down the street.

HIS POV

The cab has pulled away and is working back into the traffic flow.

EXT. STREET. NEAL
He's shocked.

NEAL
Son of a bitch!

MAN
(watching the cab pull
away)
Force mejure, my friend. Force
mejure.

He pockets the cash and looks back down the avenue for
another cab. Neal takes off after his cab

24 EXT. STREET. CAB. DAY

It's stopped at a light, turning left. Neal runs between
the waiting cars to the cab.

HIS POV

A man in his middle thirties, DEL GRIFFITH, is opening a
package of beef jerky.

DEL GRIFFITH
(to the driver)
Don't give me that "Triborough Bridge is
faster" baloney. I've been to this town
quite a few times. There isn't a cabbie
in the Big Apple who can beat me on
a fare.

EXT. CAB

Neal grabs the taxi door and whips it open.

CU. DEL

His head snaps around as the cab door flies open. He's
startled.

CU. NEAL

He's livid.

NEAL
This is my cab, you bastard!

CU. TRAFFIC LIGHT

Turns from red to green.

CU. CAB FOOT PEDALS

A greasy sneaker lifts off the brake pedal and slams down
on the gas pedal.

CU. NEAL

He disappears as the cab pulls away.

EXT. STREET

The cab lurches ahead. Neal jumps back, the briefcase goes flying again.

CU. PAVEMENT

The case hits the deck and is nailed by a bus tire.

EXT. STREET. NEAL

He's standing in the middle of the moving traffic. Defeat.

25 EXT. LAGUARDIA AIRPORT. WIDE. FULL SHOT. NIGHT

A horrible jam of cars and buses.

26 EXT. ARRIVAL ZONE. BUS. NIGHT

A huge, dirty airport bus is parked at curbside. The door opens with a gasp, releasing a parade of tourists, families, seniors, foreigners, bottom-end business types and finally, Neal Page. He's holding his briefcase by the handle which is hanging from the case by a single fastener. He's perfectly annoyed. He silently urges the people along.

27 INT. AIRPORT LOBBY. TICKET COUNTER. NIGHT

A long line. Neal looks out from the end of the line.

HIS POV

Solid people.

INT. LOBBY. TICKET COUNTER

A harried FEMALE TICKET AGENT is tapping on her computer.

AGENT

Smoking or non-smoking?

CU. DEL GRIFFITH

He's considering the question.

DEL

Smoking or non? Good question.
I'm trying to quit so I like
non-smoking because it forces me
to lay off the butts but then if
we hit some turbulence and I get
shakey, I like to smoke.

AGENT

She sighs.

AGENT

Smoking or non-smoking?

DEL

He thinks, clicks his tongue.

DEL

Can I get an aisle seat in the
last row of the non-smoking
section so that if I change my
mind I can ask someone to switch?
If you don't have an aisle. I'll
take window but if all you have
are middle seats, I'll go
non-smoking because if I don't
have enough elbow room I cheese
everybody off reaching for my
smokes. Before you answer let
me say that I noticed you're
wearing a wedding ring and I just
want to say that your husband is
a very lucky man and your perfume
is heavenly.

He smiles warmly.

DEL

And if you wouldn't mind
double-checking to see if this
is a frequent flyer bonus flight
and if so could you make sure I'm
credited? I'm saving for a little
weekender in Vegas. I'm a nut
for the Oakridge Boys. They're
at the Stardust in July.

CU. NEAL'S WATCH

It reads 5:49

INT. AIRPORT. LOBBY COUNTER

The person ahead of Neal finishes, picks up his briefcase and exits. Neal steps up to the counter. His face drops.

HIS POV

The AGENT puts a sign up on the counter. It reads.
POSITION CLOSED.

28 INT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT

Neal's running full-out down the corridor. He rounds a corner and comes to a stop.

29 INT. CORRIDOR. SECURITY CHECK POINT. NIGHT

There's a huge crowd, another long line.

INT. CORRIDOR. SECURITY CHECK POINT

Again, Del Griffith is the cause of the delay. He's emptying his pockets of anything metal. A SECURITY GUARD is scanning him with a hand-held metal detector.

DEL

You have no idea how often this happens to me.

The guard isn't interested in conversation.

DEL

It doesn't bother me. You're doing your job and I appreciate it. I'm the last person who'll give you flack, believe me. I have a buddy in Houston who has a metal plate in his head. If he doesn't have a time with you fellas. Holy Toledo!

The guard is getting a loud reading at Del's feet.

CU. DEL'S FOOT

The guard lifts Del's pant leg to reveal, stuck in the back of his cushion sole loafer, a shoe horn. He pulls it out.

GUARD AND DEL

He shows Del the shoe horn.

DEL

Son of a gun! I wondered why my damn foot hurt all day.

(more)

DEL (Cont'd)

Isn't that something? I must have
walked eight miles with that in
my shoe.

The guard dismisses him. Del takes his sample case and his
briefcase and waddles off down the corridor.

30 INT. AIRPORT. DEPARTURE GATE. NIGHT

A crowd of business flyers have besieged the gate counter.

31 INT. AIRPORT. SECURITY POINT. NIGHT

Neal rushes through the security scan and waits for his
briefcase to come through X-ray.

CU. X-RAY CONVEYOR BELT

The contents of a briefcase followed by Neal's open
briefcase.

INT. SECURITY POINT

Neal scrambles to retrieve the debris from the moving belt.

32 INT. AIRPORT. DEPARTURE GATE. NIGHT

Neal arrives at the gate, his smashed briefcase clenched
under his arm, ticket in hand.

CU. DEL

Yet again, Del is the cause of the delay.

DEL

I ordered a special meal. Any
way to let me know if it's
confirmed?

CU. AGENT

He hands Del his ticket.

AGENT

They'll let you know on board.

CU. DEL

He smiles.

DEL

You're doing your job and I
appreciate it. Thanks. I like
you, I like your airline.

He gives the guy a wink and turns to face Neal.

CU. NEAL

He recognizes Del as the person who jumped his cab.

NEAL AND DEL

Del recognizes Neal.

DEL

I know you. I'm very good with names but darn if I haven't forgotten yours.

NEAL

You stole my cab.

Neal steps around Del to the counter. Del's puzzled. He doesn't know what Neal's saying.

DEL

I stole a cab?

He taps Neal on the shoulder. Neal turns.

DEL

I never stole anything in my life.

NEAL

I hailed a cab at 58th and Park this afternoon. Before I could get in it, you took it.

It hits Del where he's seen Neal. He snaps his fingers.

DEL

You're the guy who tried to jump in my cab. You scared the bejeezuz out of me.

Neal turns back to the counter. Del thinks for a beat. He taps Neal. Neal turns.

DEL

The cab was just sitting there. I jumped in. Come to think of it, it was awfully easy to come by at rush hour.

NEAL

Forget about it.

DEL

I can't forget about something like that. How about if I buy you a frankfurter and a beer and we call it even?

NEAL

No thanks. I just want to check in and get on board.

DEL

If you're on 909 to Chicago, you have plenty of time.

NEAL

Huh?

Del points past Neal to the ticket counter. Neal turns.

HIS POV

The ticket agent has removed the departure time and is replacing it with one that reads, DELAYED.

CU NEAL

He stares at the sign. The rush was for nothing.

33 EXT. HOUSE. EVENING

The house we saw in the title sequence. Neal's house. It's snowing like crazy. A PHONE RINGS OVER.

34 INT. KITCHEN. EVENING

Bright and warm. A two-year old boy, SETH, is in a highchair. At the kitchen table are a four year-old boy, LITTLE NEAL, a seven year old girl, MARTI and Neal's wife SUSAN. She's in her mid-thirties, attractive and strong. She gets up to answer the phone.

SUE

(to Seth)

Keep your fingers out of Marti's food.

(Marti)

You keep your tongue in your mouth.

LITTLE NEAL

I didn't do anything, did I?

SUE

No. You're waiting until I get on the phone.

(more)

SUE (Cont'd)
(picks up the phone)
Hello?

Her cheery demeanor evaporates.

MARTI
Whom is it?

SUE
Where are you?

MARTI
Whom is it?

SUE
(to Marti)
Shh! It's Daddy.

Marti knows immediately what the conversation is about.
She informs her siblings.

MARTI
Flight delay.

35 INT. AIRPORT. NIGHT

Neal's on the pay phone. A couple other men are making the same call.

NEAL
You're not going to believe what happened...

36 INT. KITCHEN. SUE. EVENING

She knows exactly what happened.

SUE
(fast, certain and
sarcastic)
You raced to the airport, nearly
killed yourself and when you got
to the gate the flight was
delayed.

CU. NEAL

His mouth is frozen open. She's stolen his words.

CU. SUE

She relents.

SUE

I know you can't prevent flight delays. You can prevent travelling immediately before a holiday. I asked you not to but you had your priorities.

37 INT. AIRPORT. NEAL. NIGHT

Neal rolls his eyes.

37A CU. SUE

She knows exactly what Neal's going to do.

SUE

And don't roll your eyes.

INT. AIRPORT. NEAL

He's getting nowhere.

NEAL

Honey? I don't run the airline.

CU. SUE

She doesn't like his attitude.

SUE

I'm not arguing on the phone.
I'll see you when you get home.

She hangs up the phone.

38 INT. FLIGHT LOUNGE. LATER

Neal's sitting in the row seats reading a newspaper. He lowers his paper and looks at his shoe. A little dirt on the toe of expensive Italian slip-ons. He brushes the dirt away. Something catches his eyes.

HIS POV

Del's directly across from him in the facing seats. He has a cigarette in his mouth, a cardboard food box with a pair of jumbo hot dogs in it. He's applying mustard from individual packets. He takes a final drag on the smoke, snuffs it out in the smoker, takes a prodigious bite of the hot dog and lets the cigarette smoke trail out of his nose.

NEAL

He's revolted. He lifts his newspaper to shield himself from the sight.

CU. WALL CLOCK

It reads seven o'clock.

38A INT. FLIGHT LOUNGE

Neal's doing a crossword puzzle. He's in shirtsleeves. He lowers the magazine and sniffs. Some horrible odor is disturbing his reading. He looks down.

HIS POV

Stocking feet. One foot scratches the other. WE MOVE UP FROM THE FEET TO DEL. He's chomping on a tooth pick, reading a pornographic novel. He raises his free hand to his ear, inserts his baby finger, twists it tight into the ear canal and rubs violently.

NEAL

He goes back to his magazine.

CU. WALL CLOCK

It reads 8:00.

38B INT. FLIGHT LOUNGE. NEAL

He's fallen asleep in the chair. He stirs and lifts his head. He yawns and blinks his eyes. He looks across the lounge.

HIS POV

Del's seat is empty. The luggage is gone. All that remains is rubbish -- cigarette ashes, drink cups, a worn pair of Dr. Scholl's footpads, newspapers, magazines, napkins, candy wrappers and condiment packets.

CU. NEAL

He looks around for Del. Left and Right.

HIS POV

Departure area. No sign of Del.

HIS POV

Corridor. No Del.

39 INT. AIRPORT. DEPARTURE AREA. NIGHT

Neal gets up and heads down the corridor.

40 INT. MEN'S ROOM. NIGHT

Neal walks in. We HEAR LOUD WHISTLING. Neal stops and looks.

HIS POV

Del's in his undershirt, face lathered, razor in hand, dop kit opened on the sink. He looks around and sees Neal. He smiles.

DEL
Howdy, traveller!

NEAL

Returns a lame smile and crosses to the urinal.

DEL

He continues shaving.

DEL
On the road quite a bit? I am.
I know these airlines like the
back of my hand. An hour delay
means an hour and a half. Your
nickel against my nuts it's
snowing in Chi-town. It's the
damn lake. All that...moisture.
Chicago goes and the whole
national air transportation system
takes a dump. If you told me it
was raining rabbit pellets in
Chicago, I'd believe you. Bad
weather town. Great pizza, the
best hot dogs in the world, great
parks. Damn nice zoo. Good
aquarium, excellent art museum,
although I've never been there
personally. Knowledgable cab
drivers. Good newspapers. Nice
hotels. A bit high priced but
comfortable. You enjoy blues
music? Blues? You like the
blues?

He turns.

HIS POV

Neal's gone.

DEL

He's surprised that Neal's left. A little disappointed.

INT. BATHROOM

Another passenger walks in. Del smiles at him.

DEL
You see that guy that just
walked out? Hell of a nice guy.
Salt of the earth.

41 CU DEPARTURE GATE SIGN

The "DELAYED" sign has been replaced with another that reads, "NOW BOARDING".

42 INT. AIRPLANE. NIGHT

Neal's at the door of the plane arguing with a STEWARDESS. As he argues the first class cabin behind him fills with pilots, stewardesses and children.

STEWARDESS

This is something you should have discussed with the ticket agent.

NEAL

I couldn't discuss it with the ticket agent because I didn't know he put me in coach.

STEWARDESS

I'm sorry, I can't help you. First class is full.

NEAL

(waves his ticket)

I have a first class ticket,

STEWARDESS

You have a coach seat assignment.

A dead-heading PILOT slips around Neal into a first class seat.

STEWARDESS

(big smile)

Hi, Larry.

The pilot tips his hat to her.

STEWARDESS

(drops the smile, to Neal)

Save your boarding pass and you'll get a refund on the difference.

NEAL

I don't want a refund, I want a seat. In first class.

(more)

NEAL (Cont'd)
Where I belong. Where I was
booked and ticketed.

STEWARDESS
I have to ask you to take your
seat.

NEAL
You delay me, you bump me. What's
next?

CU. GIRL

A beautiful, young college girl on her way home from
school. She looks up and smiles from her aisle seat.

43 INT. PLANE. COACH SECTION. NIGHT

Neal slips into the middle seat. He steps over the
girl's legs, and sits down. Big smile. Coach doesn't
look to be as bad as he feared. A protly, middle-aged
WOMAN with a breathing disorder is in the window seat.
She's eating Doritos, lost in thought. Neal pays her
little mind.

GIRL
I'm Tamara.

NEAL
Neal Page.

GIRL
Do you fly alot?

NEAL
Quite a bit, yes.

He bends over to stow his briefcase under the seat. A
Stewardess leans over the girl and whispers to her.

NEAL
I'm usually up in First but I
got bumped. So, I'm...

The girl shows her ticket to the Stewardess. She points
down the aisle. The girl gets up from her seat.

CU. NEAL

Neal turns to what he thinks is the girl. His biggest
smile. It quickly dissolves.

CU DEL GRIFFITH

He's settling into the girl's seat.
Big, surprised grin.

DEL
Well, what do you know! Is this a
coincidence or what?

CU. NEAL

He looks away and closes his eyes. He can't believe what's
happening to him.

DEL

He attaches his seat belt extender and secures himself. He
adjusts his groin, puffs on his cigarette.

DEL AND NEAL

Del introduces himself.

DEL
I never introduced myself. Del
Griffith.

NEAL
Neal Page.

DEL
Nice to know you.

Neal looks at Del's paw. Reluctantly takes it. Del pumps
his arm.

DEL
I'm with American Light and
Fixture, Director of Sales, shower
curtain ring division. I sell
curtain rings. The best in the
world.

Del reaches into his vest pocket and withdraws a 5"x3"
flat, plastic case. He opens it and shows the contents to
Neal.

CU. CASE

It's a display case for a line of shower curtain rings.

DEL AND NEAL

Del snaps the case shut and returns it to his pocket.

DEL
What's your business, Neal Page?

NEAL
Marketing.

DEL
Marketing? Super! I love
marketing. I do a little of that
game myself.

He reaches under the seat, pops his briefcase open and
pulls out a calendar. He flips it open and shows it to
Neal.

CU. CALENDAR

A busty, naked girl in a shower holding curtain rings.

DEL AND NEAL

Neal winces at the unpleasant photo. Del flips the
calendar closed and offers it to Neal.

DEL
This was my idea. Keep it

NEAL
No, thanks.

DEL
Go ahead. I have plenty.

Neal shakes his head.

DEL
Take it for Pete's sake.

Neal takes the calendar.

DEL
If you've got a shower curtain
in your home, there's a
fifty/fifty chance that the rings
holding it up were sold to your
supplier by me. I like to kid
people that if it weren't for
shower curtains rings, Janet Leigh
probably wouldn't have caught her
lunch in "Psycho". You see that
flick?

Neal nods yes.

DEL

I like to joke but that one was no joke. I was new to the business when that baby hit the silver screen and that shower murder left a crap stain on the reputation of shower curtains the size of Texas. Pebble glass shower doors took a big bite out of our sales for several years. We're back on our feet now. We're doing good. The young people going into their first homes don't have the same phobia about showers that their parents had. That Alfred Hitchcock. You know what that "Birds" film did to parakeet sales? El Dumpo, Jack. Sewer City. Good friend of mine lost his shirt. You use curtains or doors in your home?

Neal stares at him.

DEL

Doors? Hell, it's no sweat off my back. I'm just happy to have someone to talk to. I finished my book about an hour ago. Filthy goddamn thing. When you travel as much as I do, you run out of reading material. If it's been published, I've read it. Fiction, non-fiction, the classics -- Robbins, Krantz, Iacocca. You name it, I've read it. I got so hard-up last week on a layover in Atlanta, I read a biography of Prince. That's not his real name, by the way. It's Rogers Nelson.

Neal smiles politely.

NEAL

I don't want to be rude but I really have alot of work to do.

DEL

Don't let me stand in your way. The last thing I want to be remembered as is an annoying blabbermouth.

(more)

)

DEL (Cont'd)

Nothing grinds my gears worse than some chowderhead who doesn't know when to keep his big trap shut. They've got "no smoking" signs; they oughta have "no talking" signs. Ther've been plenty of times when I would have switched that sucker on, believe you me. If you catch me running off at the mouth, give me a good poke in the nose.

Del reaches into the seat pocket in front of him and removes the airline magazine. Neal bends over and opens his crushed briefcase. He takes out a bound report. Del glances down at the briefcase.

DEL

What the heck happened to your briefcase? Looks like a vehicle ran over it.

NEAL

Cab.

DEL

What a shame! What'd you pay for it?

Neal is reluctant to answer. It's none of Del's business.

DEL

Gift? Mine, too. Gift from the company for getting the shower ring contract for the U.S. Navy. You know how many rings that baby was worth?

NEAL

I have no idea.

DEL

Try 37 million.

Neal smiles and opens his report.

DEL

I figure that over the next years several millions of sailors are going to use those showers with our rings and if they take the time to inquire about the rings and they feel they're good rings, when they get out of the service and consider shower rings, they'll select ours.

NEAL

Can you excuse me?

DEL

Sorry. I'm being a blabbermouth, aren't I?

Neal sighs. Del's driving him mad.

NEAL

I really have to finish...

Del holds up his hand, cutting Neal off. He leans back in his seat and opens the magazine. Neal opens his report. They both read for a few moments. Del lowers his magazine.

DEL

You know why we're not taking off?
Bet you three bucks and my left nut
Chicago's socked in.

44 EXT. CHICAGO. O'HARE AIRPORT. NIGHT

The beginning of a major snow storm.

45 EXT. THE LOOP. NIGHT

Snow is piling up.

46 EXT. NEAL'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Snowing.

47 INT. NEAL'S HOUSE. MARTI'S ROOM. NIGHT

Susan is tucking Marti in.

MARTI

When will Daddy be home?

SUSAN

Soon.

MARTI

Will I see Grandma and Grandpa
first or will I see Daddy first?

SUSAN

Grandma and Grandpa aren't coming
until tomorrow afternoon.
Daddy'll be here when you wake
up.

MARTI

Will he come to school to see me
read my poem?

SUSAN

Of course.

She kisses Marti, crosses to the door and turns off the
light. She glances back into the room.

HER POV

Marti's window. A curtain of snow is falling outside the
window.

48 INT. AIRPLANE. COACH SECTION. WIDE. LATER

The airplane is aloft. Dinner is being served.

DEL AND NEAL

They've been served. Del is about to sail into the seafood
salad he ordered in advance. Neal is staring at a
grotesque, thrice-cooked square of lasagna. He taps it
with his fork.

DEL

I always order a special meal.
On this airline, I go with the
seafood salad, on American I go
for the kosher plate, United I
say I'm a youngster and I get the
kiddie plate. Hot dog, potato
chips, a gherkin and a little
package of Oreos.

NEAL

(motions to his dinner)
What's this?

Del looks at his meal.

DEL

About seven hours ago it was
lasagna. Now there's no telling.
(more)

DEL (Cont'd)

When a flight's delayed that crap gets heated and reheated and reheated again so that by the time it's served it's...like that. I knew a gal once who worked for one of the airline food contractors. She lost the tip of her finger slicing carrots. The son of a gun went right in the pot. She never did find it. She thinks it was served on the Singapore run. Isn't that something?

Neal looks at the lasagna with revulsion.

DEL

If you elect not to procede with the meal, I'll take it off your hands.

Neal gestures to Del that he's free to sail in. Del spears the sad little cube with his fork and gladly moves it to his plate. Neal senses that he's being watched. He glances to the window.

HIS POV

The Woman in the seat next to him is smiling at him. She looks down at his tray.

CU. TRAY

A wilted salad, a roll and a sealed cup of salad dressing is all that remains.

INT. PLANE. NEAL AND THE WOMAN

He offers the woman the salad. She gladly takes it. She points to the cup of salad dressing. Neal gives it to her. She points to the roll. He allows her to take it for herself. She points to his watch and smiles. He politely shakes his head no.

48A EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT. NIGHT

Planes parked, covered with snow.

48B INT. O'HARE. FLIGHT INFO SCREENS. NIGHT

In quick succession, flights are cancelled. One after the other, up and down the screens.

46C INT. O'HARE

Stranded passengers loiter about the airport.

48D INT. PLANE. FIRST CLASS CABIN

Larry, the pilot, is glancing through a magazine in his spacious window seat. He's sipping an after dinner drink. The aisle seat is empty. The Stewardess we saw earlier is sitting on the arm of the aisle seat.

STEWARDESS

You're sure I can't get you
anything else? Cheese? Fruit?

LARRY

No, thank's, Liz. Why don't
you sit down? The seat's empty.

The Stewardess slips into the empty seat.

49 INT. PLANE. WIDE. LATER

The lights are out except for the occasional reading lamp.

INT. PLANE. NEAL

Neal's sipping coffee, going over his water-stained papers. He sets down the report and looks at his watch. He glances at Del.

HIS POV

Del's facing him, just inches away, eyes closed, mouth open, toothpick dangling from his lip, snoring like a sow. His calculator watch alarm is BEEPING.

CU. NEAL

Staring at Del.

HIS POV

Del opens his eyes.

Del

Six bucks and my right nut we're
not landing in Chicago.

He shuts off his watch alarm and goes back to sleep.

50 OMIT

51 OMIT

52 EXT. NEAL'S HOUSE. NIGHT

The snow is piling up. A TELEPHONE RINGS OVER.

53 INT. HOUSE. FOYER. NIGHT

It's dark. We HEAR THE PHONE RINGING.

54 INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Susan's asleep. She stirs, fumbles for the phone, answers.

SUSAN

Where are you?

55 INT. WICHITA AIRPORT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT

Neal's on a pay phone.

NEAL

Why am I in Wichita? Because
we couldn't land in Chicago.

56 INT. NEAL'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Susan's in bed. She's angry.

SUSAN

I don't understand what Witchita has to do with a snow storm in Chicago. Is there something going on, Neal?

57 INT. AIRPORT. NIGHT

Neal rests his head against the wall.

NEAL

All that's going on is I'm in Witchita. We left New York and in flight they closed Chicago. We've landed in Witchita. I didn't call for grief, I called to let you know where I was.

58 INT. AIRPORT. DEL

He's sitting in a departure lounge, smoking, watching Neal.

HIS POV

Neal's across the corridor, talking on the phone.

CU. DEL

He studies Neal.

59 CU. NEAL

He continues his conversation.

NEAL

I'm doing the best I can. I'll be home as soon as possible. I have a key, I'll let myself in. Maybe if you're real lucky, the plane'll go down.

60 INT. HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Susan resents the remark.

SUSAN

That's a real nice thing for a father to say. If you're coming home with an attitude, I'd rather you didn't come home at all. And I don't mean that in a mortal sense. Good night.

She hangs up the phone. In frustration, she socks the pillow. She turns off the light and buries herself in the covers.

61 INT. AIRPORT. NEAL. NIGHT

He hangs up the phone, curses under his breath and starts back down the corridor. Del calls to him.

DEL

Neal?

Neal stops and turns. Del gets up from his seat and shuffles into the corridor.

DEL

A little trouble on the home front?

As far as Neal's concerned, his home life is none of Del's business.

DEL

Sounded like things were getting a little testy.

NEAL

I don't think that's any of your concern.

DEL

Probably not. I thought you might want to air some feelings.

NEAL

I don't.

DEL

The finest line a man'll ever walk is between success at work and success at home. You know what my motto is? Love your wife, like your work.

A polite pause. Neal isn't accepting advice from Del.

NEAL

I'll remember that. What's the flight situation?

DEL

Simple. There's no way on Earth we're taking off from here tonight. We'd have more luck playing pick-up-sticks with our butt cheeks than getting out of here before daybreak.

NEAL

There are other airlines.

DEL

One goes belly-up, the others are sure to follow. I may not know the price of eggs in Sweden, but I know the U.S. air transport system and when you waylay to Witchita enroute to Chicago, you're up the creek. I'd venture to say Old Man Winter's busting records in Chicago right now.

Neal's a little worried that Del may be right. But he's not prepared to take any advice.

NEAL

I guess I'll find out soon enough.

DEL

By the time you wait for the airlines to pull the plug on the flight, which they will sooner or later, you'll have an easier time finding a three-legged ballerina than a hotel room. I know Witchita. I know airlines. I know the hotel scene. They start diverting flights here and you don't book a room, you're looking at a couple nights on a dirty floor.

NEAL

You're saying I'll be stuck in Witchita?

DEL

I'm saying you are stuck in Witchita.

CU. NEAL

A look of alarm.

62 INT. AIRPORT. FLIGHT LOUNGE. BOARDING COUNTER. NIGHT

An airline REPRESENTATIVE addresses the crowd over the PA.

REP

I'm sorry to inform you that we're cancelling flight 909 due to severe weather in Chicago.
(more)

REP (Cont'd)

On behalf of everyone at
Mid-Central Air, I'd like to
extend my deepest apologies for
any inconvenience we may have
caused you and wish you the
happiest of holidays. Thank you.

He clicks off and prepares for the onslaught.

CU. NEAL

He rests his head against the cold glass.

NEAL

Shit...

63 INT. BAGGAGE AREA. NIGHT

Del's dragging his trunk across the floor to the doors. He
has his sample case, suitcase and briefcase resting on it.
Neal's at the door with his two suiter over his arm, his
crushed briefcase under his other arm.

DEL

How many times have I been right
so far?

NEAL

I've lost count.

DEL

Did you book a room?

NEAL

I couldn't get in anywhere.

DEL

I've been waylaid more times than
I can remember. A day here, two
days there. Once I was stuck in
Cheyenne for four days waiting
to get into Denver. I prepare.

NEAL

You got a room?

DEL

As soon as I got off the plane.
You called home, I called the
Interstate Inn.

NEAL

I missed that one.

DEL
Most people do. But they'll be
plenty popular tonight. I'll tell
you what, I know the manager of
the Interstate Inn pretty well.
Sold him the rings in his showers.
You pick up the cab fare, I'll
see that he puts you up.

For the first time in hours, Neal brightens.

DEL
Grab an end, will ya?

Neal sets his briefcase on top of the trunk and lifts his
end. He finds it extremely heavy. He and Del lug the
trunk down the corridor.

NEAL
How far away is this place?

DEL
It's just up the road a piece.

CU. TAXI METER. NIGHT

It reads \$124.50.

64 EXT. HIGHWAY. TAXI CAB. NIGHT

It's a 1966 Pontiac Bonneville. It's riding high off the
ground on hydraulic shocks. It's painted ruby red. On the
side, in hot rod script, are the words, "CHARIOT OF SIN".

Pipes jut out the sides, mud flaps adorn the wheels, a
large spoiler is affixed to the trunk, the hood is
protected by an automotive bra, curb feelers stick out from
the wheel wells like whiskers, a great, long antenna flails
about in the wind, extra lights abound, great fat tires
with wire wheels, breasts are painted on the differential,
a huge spotlight protrudes from the driver's window, a
loudspeaker is attached to the roof and a pair of ominous
ram bars grace the front bumper.

65 INT. CAB. BACKSEAT. NIGHT

Del and Neal are sunken in the backseat. It's all fuzzy,
electric plush, day-glow and glitter. The rear window is
hung with air-fresheners and nudie rubbish. The ceiling is
plastered with centerfold shots. The taxi is a mobile
shrine to squalid sex. Del is quite comfortable. Neal is
in a state of acute execration. He keeps his limbs in
close, lest they come in contact with some filthy
substance. He's looking forward, at the back of the
driver's head.

TB

NEAL'S POV

Flashy shoulders, encased in an ancient and thoroughly filthy leather jacket. Atop a thick neck speckled with pock marks and errant hairs is a rather small head festooned with a very ill-fitting toupee. The toupee is black and the hair beneath is graying brown. The toupee rests slightly away from the natural hairline about midway down the head. Past his body we see an enormous furry steering wheel with a necker's knob, an equally furry dashboard glowing with dials, gauges and lights. A two-way radio delivers a constant stream of chatter from a base somewhere.

INT. CAB. BACKSEAT

Neal whispers to Del.

NEAL

Where the hell is the motel?

Del looks out the window. He doesn't recognize anything. He leans forward and talks to the DRIVER.

DEL

How much longer, Doobie?

A hefty, middle-aged greaser turns to reveal a tremendous glistening black wave of artificial hair. Sideburns that would have shamed Elvis. A toothpick in his teeth.

DOOBIE

Not much.

He gives Neal a wink and turns back.

NEAL

Just out of curiosity, why didn't you take the interstate?

DOOBIE

You said your friend's never been here. I thought he might like to have a look around. You don't see nothin' on the interstate but interstate.

NEAL

(lowers his voice)

It's the middle of the night.

DEL

(softly)

He's proud of his town. That's pretty darn rare these days.

66 EXT. MOTEL. NIGHT

Just off the highway. An anonymous cinderblock rectangle. The kind of place you stay in once. Emergency shelter. Trucks parked everywhere. The taxi pulls in and rumbles to a stop.

67 INT. LOBBY. NIGHT

Fake wood and naugahyde. A tiny front desk, two sofas, a rack of tourist info, a pay phone, a newspaper box and an easel with a cardboard sign with words in glitter -- LISA PELSTRAM'S ACCORDIAN REVUE. Del and Neal lug the trunk into the lobby and set it down.

DEL
Evening, Gus.

The DESK CLERK stands up from his chair where he's sitting watching TV.

GUS
Del Griffith? How the hell are you?

DEL
I'm still a million bucks shy of being a millionaire. How are you?

GUS
I was doing pretty good there for a while but Sunday I pissed my pants during 60 Minutes so I guess I gotta go back in for more plumbing work.

DEL
Tough break, Gus. I'd like you to meet an old friend of mine. This is Neal Page. Neal, this is Gus Mooney.

Gus reaches his hand across the desk. Neal shakes it.

NEAL

Glad to meet you.

GUS

Likewise.

DEL

We were flying into Chicago from New York and a storm brought us here.

GUS

I know all about it. I must got half your flight already booked in. Now, tell me, Del, am I just getting old or are they letting fat gals be stewardesses these days?

DEL

Times change, Gus. I told Neal you'd be able to fix him up.

Gus clucks his tongue.

GUS

You know, Del, I'd rather shoot arrows out my ass than disappoint you or a friend of yours but I'm booked solid. I got three of those fat gals sharing a single as it is. One twin and two cots and them cots are really built for youngsters.

Neal looks at Del with a sigh.

DEL

Nothing, Gus?

GUS

If old Herbert Hoover come back from the dead and needed a room for the night, I couldn't help him. Sorry.

DEL

(to Neal)

If you don't mind a little snoring, you can bunk with me.

NEAL

No, I couldn't.

DEL

You spend a hundred and a half getting here. You want to blow that and more to sleep at the airport?

NEAL

That's all right. I'll be fine.

DEL

I'm straight, if that's a worry.

Neal chuckles.

DEL

No skin off my nose if you sleep in a chair.

NEAL

I can't impose on you like that.

DEL

Tell you what. You pick up the room tab and I won't be imposed on one iota.

Neal shrugs. He has no choice. Gus slides a form and a pen across the counter.

GUS

You have a credit card?

Neal reaches for his wallet and takes out his American Express card. Gus takes it. Del reaches in his pocket takes out his wallet.

DEL

I have my discount room card. Can you accept it?

GUS

I'll have to charge you for a double but with the discount, it'll come out even.

(to Neal)

It'll go alot smoother with my bookkeeping if you note that you and Del are Mr. and Mrs. whatever your last name is.

Neal stares at him. He looks at Del. Del shrugs. Del hands Gus his discount card. Gus turns to the desk and his credit card machine.

GUS

Had an old geezer die in his sleep
last night in your room. Had to
bring a new mattress in from my
brother's place in Salinas.

Gus slides the imprinter over the credit card and the
charge slip. He replaces the credit card with Del's
discount card.

DEL

Gee, I hope it wasn't somebody
I knew.

GUS

Fritz Obermann?

Del smacks the counter.

DEL

Oh, damn!

NEAL

(whispers)

Ask him if it was contagious.

DEL

How'd he go, Gus?

GUS

He just blew-up. It was
one of those things I guess.
Just blew-up

DEL

I've read about those things.

Gus returns to the counter with the credit card receipt and
the two cards. He lays one down on the counter and hands
the other one to Del.

CU. DEL'S WALLET.

Del slides Neal's American Express card into his wallet.

CU. COUNTER

Del's discount card, which is similar to an American
Express card, is picked up by Neal.

INT. LOBBY.

Neal puts the card in his wallet without noticing the
error. Gus takes the form Neal filled-out. He hands Neal
a key.

GUS

You're all set. Best room in
the complex.

68 INT. MOTEL ROOM . NIGHT

It's dark. The door opens and Del walks in. He turns on
the light. Neal looks in. His face drops.

HIS POV

A tiny room with a double bed.

NEAL AND DEL

Neal is horrified. Del's excited.

DEL
New bedspreads!

69 INT. MOTEL ROOM. BATHROOM SHOWER

Neal's standing in the shower with his face to the spray. He enjoys the relaxing heat and clean. Something occurs to him. He moves his head out of the spray and looks up.

HIS POV

The shower curtain rings.

70 INT. ROOM. NIGHT

Del's in his pajama's and robe. He takes a pillow and framed photograph out of his trunk. He fondly looks at the photo.

CU. PHOTO

It's of a young woman. Friendly and comfy and smiling like a Crest ad. The photo's probably fifteen years old.

INT. ROOM

Del kisses the picture and sets it on the nightstand next to the bed. He closes the trunk and slides it against the wall. He takes his dop kit out of the suitcase, closes it and puts it on top of the trunk and turns on the TV. He dials in a religious program. He slips a quarter into the bed vibrator and lays down.

70A INT. SHOWER

Neal reaches for the soap. Stops short.

HIS POV

The soap dish. A tiny bar of soap covered with hair.

CU. NEAL

He carefully holds the disgusting bar of soap to the spray to wash the hair away. He senses a presence and turns slowly to his left.

HIS POV

Through the translucent shower curtain he sees the outline of Del sitting on the john reading the paper.

CU. NEAL

He's horrified at Del's casualness.

71 INT. MOTEL. HALLWAY

A pimply, TEENAGE BOY shuffles down the hall holding a six-pack and a large cardboard pizza box. He stops outside Del's room and knocks.

72 INT. ROOM

We hear LOUD KNOCKING ON THE DOOR. The bed's vibrating. Del. yells O.C.

DEL

I'll be with you in a minute.

CU. NEAL

A look of abject terror as he misinterprets Del's remark.

CU. TOILET HANDLE

Del's hand pushes the lever down, flushing the toilet.

INT. ROOM

Del strolls out of the bathroom with his newspaper under his arm.

73 INT. SHOWER

Neal shrieks as the water temperature changes from the flushing of the toilet.

INT. ROOM

Del opens the door. The pizza boy offers the pizza and beer.

DEL

How much?

BOY

Nine...teen bucks.

Del takes the pizza and the beer. The Pizza Boy opens the shower and notices that the bathroom door is partially open. He shoots a quick look at Del. He's turned away. Pizza Boy pushes the door open a little and peeks in.

HIS POV

We see the outline of Neal's body in the shower. He's about three-quarters away and he's rinsing his hair. The boy looks very much female.

CU. PIZZA BOY

A sly smile.

HIS POV

Neal leans out of the shower, revealing himself to be male. He gropes for the shampoo. His eyes are closed, he doesn't see the Pizza Boy.

CU. PIZZA BOY

He's horrified. He quickly closes the door.

INT. ROOM

Del sets the pizza on top of his suitcase and the six-pack on the vibrating bed. He looks around for his wallet. He sees Neal's pants hanging over the chair. He hesitates for a moment, throws a look to the bathroom, fishes out the wallet, extracts a twenty, crosses back to Pizza Boy and pays him.

DEL

Keep it.

BOY

This is a twenty.

DEL

Yes, it is.

BOY

The pizza was nineteen bucks.

DEL

Yes, I believe that's what you said. The extra is for you. Put it towards the college fund.

BOY

That's like only, what?, like a five percent tip?

DEL

You're good with figures. You'll do well in college.

BOY

You know what I call a five percent tip?

Del shoves the boy out the door.

DEL

What I mean from my college fund is a dollar.

BOY

A dollar?

DEL

100 pennies. All yours. Put
it in the college fund.

BOY

You got any more?

DEL

Nope.

Del closes the door on the kid. He crosses to the pizza
and opens the box.

CU. PIZZA

The ugliest pizza ever made. Cheese, sausage, olives,
green peppers, jalapenos, kraut, bacon, beans, corn,
anchovies.

INT. ROOM

Del scoops a piece of the abomination out of the box.

DEL

Dinner's here!

74 INT. BATHROOM. SHOWER

Neal pulls open the curtain to reveal a completely sacked
bathroom. Towels on the floor, sink half-filled with soapy
water, toothpaste on the counter top, flecks on the mirror,
toilet paper unravelled.

CU. NEAL

He's revolted, looks for a towel.

HIS POV

From a wad of used towels in a puddle on the floor to a
towel rack with two washcloths. A hand reaches for them.

CU. NEAL

He dries his hair with the washcloths.

INT. ROOM

Del's in the vibrating bed, eating pizza, watching TV. A
few beats and the bed stops vibrating. Neal comes out of
the bathroom in his boxer shorts.

NEAL

Do you realize that you used all the towels?

DEL

I'm pretty big and they were pretty small. I'm sorry. It wasn't too neighborly of me.

NEAL

And almost all the toilet paper.

DEL

Those New York hot dogs. I'm guilty.

NEAL

You left the bathroom a filthy mess.

DEL

I'm not used to a roommate.

Neal sniffs. Makes a horrible face.

NEAL

What smells?

DEL

The pizza came.

NEAL

That's pizza?

DEL

It's good. I saved you a piece.

NEAL

I asked you to order me a salad.

DEL

They didn't have salad. I had him put extra vegetables on the pizza.

Neal opens the box and looks into it. He makes another face and takes the box around to the front of the bed and sits down. He scoops out the last slice. He takes a bite.

NEAL

Mmm. Horrible. If I wasn't so hungry, I'd throw-up.

DEL

Wash it down with a beer.

Neal sets the pizza down and pulls a beer off the six-pack.

NEAL

Warm?

DEL

It comes out warm, what the hell difference does it make how it goes in? Toss me one.

Neal tosses Del the beer. He takes another. He and Del open simultaneously. The vibrating bed has sufficiently shaken the beer to provide a double beer explosion.

74B INT. ROOM. LATER

The lights are out. Del and Neal are in bed. It's quiet.

DEL

I'd switch pillows with you but I'd sneeze all night. I carry my own pillow. It's hypoallergenic. I had no idea those beers were going to blow like that.

NEAL

You had the beer on a vibrating bed. What'd you think was going to happen?

DEL

It's been a long day. It didn't occur to me.

NEAL

It didn't occur to you so I have to sleep in a puddle of beer.

DEL

I'm sleeping in pizza. You want to switch?

NEAL

No. I want to sleep.

DEL

Same here. I'm bushed.

NEAL

Good night.

DEL

Sleep tight.

There's a long pause. Del strikes a match and lights a cigarette.

TB

NEAL
What're you doing?

DEL
Having a butt.

NEAL
In bed?

DEL
Do you have a problem with that?

NEAL
A big problem.

DEL
I'm not going to fall asleep.

NEAL
I'd rather not risk it. I don't
smoke. Smoke annoys me.
Especially in the dark, in bed.

DEL
I always have a smoke before I
go to sleep.

Neal switches on the light.

NEAL
I was on my way home to spend a
nice holiday with my family and
instead I'm in a motel bed with
a stranger five hundred miles away
from my house and I don't know
how or when I'll get there. I'm
a patient man. I'm paying for the
room. I paid for the cab...

DEL
You paid for the pizza, too.

NEAL
I did?

DEL
All I had was a hundred. The kid
didn't have change.

NEAL
You went in my wallet?

DEL
Are you mad?

NEAL

You have no right to go in my wallet!

DEL

What was I supposed to do? I had to pay for the pizza. You were showering. Did you want me to send some punk kid in to look at your dick?

NEAL

You stay out of my stuff.

DEL

(offended)

I'm not interested in your stuff.

NEAL

Good.

DEL

In fact, I'm bored with your stuff.

NEAL

What? You looked?

DEL

I didn't look.

NEAL

Then why are you bored with it?

DEL

(lying)

It's a figure of speech.

NEAL

Bullshit! You went through my bags!

Del jumps on the defensive.

DEL

How did I know you weren't some kind of shady guy? I'm not sleeping with a stranger without knowing a little about him. What if you had a gun in your bag? I been on the road too long to not know to take a precaution or two.

NEAL

Did I go through your stuff?

DEL

I don't know. Did you?

NEAL

No, I did not! And I'm mad as hell that you went through mine.

DEL

Two suits, two dirty shirts, some stale shorts and some skin magazines.

Neal's embarrassed.

DEL

Don't sweat it, Neal. There's a reason every hotel newsstand sells those kind of magazines. There isn't a married man alive that hasn't...

NEAL

You done with your goddamn cigarette?

Del takes one last puff. He drops it in a beer can and swishes it out.

DEL

Done.

Neal turns off the light. He settles back into the bed. There's another long pause. Del clears his throat. Loud and graphic. He repeats it.

NEAL

What're you doing?

DEL

Clearing my pipes.

NEAL

Why?

DEL

I'm doing it for you.

NEAL

Don't bother.

DEL

You like loud snoring?

NEAL

No.

DEL

Then let me clear my pipes.

Del snorts a couple more times. The room falls silent for another long beat.

DEL

Neal?

NEAL

What!

There's a long pause.

DEL

I have got to fart something fierce.

Neal rips the covers off and jumps out of bed. He turns on the light. He grabs his pants and slips them on.

DEL

Hey! I'm just being honest, for Christ's sake! I could have sneaked it on you.

Neal grabs his shirt.

DEL

Where're you going?

NEAL

I'm sleeping in the lobby.

DEL

Aw, come on! I'll go in the john.

He pulls back the covers and slides his legs over the side of the bed.

DEL

If your kid shits his trousers do you smack him?

Neal stops at the door. He throws a look at Del.

NEAL

What the hell are you talking about?

DEL

You're not a very tolerant person.

NEAL

I'm a very tolerant person.

DEL
Oh, really?

NEAL
Look, you've been under my skin since New York. You ripped off my cab...

DEL
I know all this. You paid for the room, the pizza...you're a tight-ass.

NEAL
How'd you like a mouthful of teeth?

DEL
You're hostile, too. Nice personality combination. Hostile and intolerant. That's borderline criminal.

NEAL
Screw you! You spill beer all over the bed, you smoke, you make a mess of the bathroom...

DEL
And I let you stay in my room. I let you pay for it so you wouldn't feel like an intruder which you most certainly are.

NEAL
I'm an intruder?

DEL
You're an intruder. I was having a nice trip until you walked into my life.

NEAL
I walked into your life? Who talked my ear off on the plane?

DEL
Who told you to book a room? Out of the goodness of my dumb old heart, I offered you help. You're an ungrateful jackass. Go to sleep in the lobby. Go ahead. I hope you wake up so stiff you can't move.

) Neal hesitates at the door.

NEAL

You saw me coming. You're no saint. You get a free room. Free cab. And somebody who'll listen to your boring stories.

Del glares at Neal.

DEL

You want to hurt me? Go ahead. If it makes you feel better...be my guest. I'm an easy target. I like people, Neal. I even like you. People are my business. They're my business because I've made them my business. Yeah, I talk too much. I also listen too much. You can be a cold-hearted cynic. I don't care. Think what you want about me. I'm not changing. I like me. My wife likes me. My customers like me. Because I'm the real article. I'm a human being. Flaws, fat and farts. I'm flesh and blood.

CU. NEAL

He feels like the last slice on a loaf of bread.

CU. DEL

He's serious and genuine.

INT. ROOM

Neal closes the door and walks back to the bed. He steps out of his pants and gets into bed. He turns out the light. They both settle in.

NEAL

Sorry.

DEL

(after a long pause)

So am I.

NEAL

Night.

DEL

Sleep tight.

(pause)

My wife used to say sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite. I've actually never seen a bed bug. I seen plenty of other things.

Truck lights outside

DEL

Nah. It's just an old
saying.

(pause)

Maybe lice.

EXT. MOTEL

A huge semi-tractor pulls up outside the motel room.

INT. MOTEL

The room is flooded with light.

75 INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

The pizza boy's still hanging around. He puts his ear to the door and listens. He reaches into his back pocket and withdraws a room key.

76 EXT..MOTEL. MORNING

It's even uglier in the day light. In the middle of nothing..

77 INT. BEDROOM. CU. DEL AND NEAL. MORNING

Sleeping. Tight as spoons. Del has his arm around Neal's chest. Neal's holding Del's hand. Del's face is in the crook of Neal's neck. Nestled tight and warm. They're both sleeping, sweet and satisfied. Del snuggles and nibbles Neal's earlobe with his dry lips. Neal smiles in his sleep. A beat and the smile relaxes. Somewhere in his unconscious mind, he senses something's not right. Another beat and Neal opens his eyes. He thinks for a moment. He slowly brings Del's hand up to his face and looks at it. Del's eyes open. He looks around, orients himself. He knows something's terribly wrong.

DEL

Neal?

NEAL

Del?

DEL

Why are you holding my hand?

NEAL

Why did you kiss my ear?

DEL

I don't know.

NEAL

Where's your other hand?

DEL

(worried)

I'm not sure.

NEAL

Find it, Del!

Del thinks another beat. His hand emerges from under Neal's pillow.

NEAL

On the count of three. One...

DEL

Two...

NEAL AND DEL

THREE!

78 INT. ROOM. MORNING

Del and Neal burst out of the bed, screaming and shivering with revulsion.

79 INT. BATHROOM. LATER

Neal's standing at the mirror, studying his sleepy, stubbled face. The water's running in the sink. He bends down and splashes cold water on his face. Several good splashes. A big last splash and he holds his hands to his face and freezes. A long beat and he slowly removes his hands and looks down.

HIS POV

Del's socks soaking in the sink.

CU. NEAL

Abject horror.

79A INT. BEDROOM

Del's sitting on the edge of the bed, clipping his toenails, watching cartoons on TV.

79B INT. BATHROOM

Neal reaches for a towel.

CU. SINK

Del's underpants are balled up on the edge of the sink. Neal's hand feels around for the shorts, finds them and picks them up.

CU. NEAL

Drying his face with the underpants. It occurs to him that the fabric isn't common to bathtowels. He stops drying. Freezes again. Draws the underpants away from his face and looks at them with complete revulsion.

80 EXT. NEAL'S HOUSE. DAY

Winter Wonderland. Street. Church. Big, expensive houses. The storm has come and gone.

EXT. NEAL'S HOUSE. DAY

The cause of Neal's delay looks lovely on the trees, lawn and house.

81 INT. NEAL'S BEDROOM. DAY

Warm and comfortable. Marti, Little Neal and Seth are staring at the empty bed. Marti lifts up the covers.

MARTI

Daddy?

LITTLE NEAL

He's not there?

MARTI

Nope.

82 INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Susan's in her robe, making school lunches, talking on the phone.

SUSAN

You shared a motel room with a stranger? Are you crazy?

83 INT. MOTEL ROOM. DAY

Neal's dressing as he talks. He removes a suit from a laundry box. It's grey wool.

NEAL

What was I supposed to do? Sleep in the airport?

SUSAN'S VOICE

This whole thing is insane. I don't know what the hell you're doing!

NEAL

I'm trying to get home!

84 INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Susan pours herself another cup of coffee.

SUSAN

It doesn't sound like you're trying to get home if you're shacking up with strangers.

85 INT. MOTEL ROOM. DAY

Neal slips on his shirt. He doesn't notice that the sleeves are four inches too short.

NEAL

I didn't feel like sleeping in a chair.

SUSAN'S VOICE

I watched the news this morning and they said O'Hare is open and flights are landing and taking off.

Neal slips on his trousers. They're also four inches too short. He doesn't notice.

NEAL

If that's the case, then I'll start trying to book a flight.

SUSAN'S VOICE

It'd be nice if you could drop in for Thanksgiving.

Neal slips on his suitcoat. It's also too short. He turns to the mirror. Freezes. The phone falls out of his hand to the floor.

86 INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY

Del's dressed in fresh, clean clothes. Neal's wearing his clothes from the previous day. Del's finishing off a stack of pancakes.

DEL

I had no idea they'd launder and starch your suit. You were thrilled this morning when the laundry came back. Remember, you thanked me for sending it out even though you didn't ask me to? You know, I think if you find the right place, they can stretch your suit out so it'll fit again. I personally don't invest in fabrics that can't bear up to a motel laundry.

Neal glares at him.

DEL

I ordered you a Pony Express.

Neal looks at the plate.

DEL

It's just a fancy name for a ground beef and gravy omelette. Since I don't know your eating habits yet, I just went ahead and ordered you something that everybody likes.

NEAL

I wanted a grapefruit.

DEL

I had the last one. I'm sorry.

Del hands Neal a bowl of oatmeal.

DEL

I didn't touch my oatmeal.

Neal looks at it. He takes it from Del and begins cautiously eating it.

DEL

What'd the airline say?

NEAL

Everything's booked solid but they said I have a good chance of getting on standby.

DEL

Uh, huh. If they told you wolverines make good house pets would you believe them?

NEAL

What choice do I have?

DEL

You want to be in Chicago by tonight?

NEAL

At the outside.

DEL

Regardless of what the airline told you, and believe me they'll tell you Abe Lincoln died in a boating accident if they think that it'll prevent a ticket return. Chicago by tonight's a stretch. I think if you plan on tomorrow morning you're still tugging your tamale.

NEAL

I'm not spending Thanksgiving in Wichita. I have a family waiting for me.

DEL

Worse things have happened. Ask any wartime resident of Dresden.

NEAL

I'm home tonight come hell or high water.

DEL

Which do you prefer? I'm going with the high water myself. If you think the airline gives two craps and a doorbell chime if you eat turkey with your family tomorrow, you're deluded.

NEAL

I'll get home.

DEL

Not on an airplane. There's 24 hours of air traffic backed-up. Anyway you slice it, the odds are you and me are eating turkey right here.

An anorexic WAITRESS cruises by, refills their coffee cups and drops off the check.

DEL

If we wait for a flight.

NEAL

How the hell else will we get home?

DEL

I've got a buddy in the railroad business.

NEAL

Train?

Del grabs the check. Neal snatches it away from him.

NEAL

I've paid for everything else, why break precedent.

DEL

Hey, I'm starting to feel like a freeloader here.

NEAL

You get me on the train and you're no freeloader.

Neal reaches for his wallet and opens it. It's empty. He looks angrily at Del.

DEL

What?

NEAL

You know goddamn well, what!

DEL

I'm sorry, I don't.

Neal shows him his empty wallet.

NEAL

I had seven hundred dollars in here!

DEL

I don't have your dough, Neal. I'm alot of things but I'm not a thief.

NEAL

You went through my stuff last night, didn't you? Huh?

DEL

I didn't touch your money! And I don't care for the accusation.

NEAL

Well, I had seven hundred dollars in here. You went into it for the pizza. Maybe you...

Del digs his hand into his back pocket and whips out his fat, worn, brown leather wallet. He slaps it on the table.

DEL

Count it!

NEAL

Like you'd keep it in your wallet if you stole it.

DEL

There's two hundred and sixty three dollars in there. If there's a dollar more, you can call me a thief.

NEAL
That doesn't prove a damn thing!

DEL
Count it!

Neal picks up the wallet and opens it. He looks in the money section.

DEL
Two hundred sixty three..

NEAL
It's empty.

DEL
Huh?

NEAL
Dry.

Del grabs the wallet from him. He looks at it. He looks at Neal. Neal's looking at him. A long beat.

DEL
We were robbed?

NEAL
When?

DEL
Did you lock the door when you came back to bed?

NEAL
It locked when I closed it.

DEL
The chain-lock?

Neal thinks. He shakes his head.

NEAL
I don't think so.

DEL
We had a visitor.
(pause)
Do you have any money?

Neal reaches in his pocket. He takes out a few crumpled bills and some change. Del reaches in his pocket. He comes up with a dollar. Neal looks at the check.

NEAL
Six fifty.

Del counts out the money.

DEL
We're a buck short.

He calls the waitress over.

DEL
Hon? You charged me for oatmeal?
She looks at the check.

WAITRESS
Yeah.

DEL
I didn't get it.

WAITRESS
Sure you did.

DEL
If I got it, I'd have oatmeal on
my breath. Right? Bend over and
take a whiff. Then you tell me
I got my oatmeal. Come on.

The waitress stares at him.

WAITRESS
I know for a fact I gave you your
oatmeal 'cause while I was
carrying it over here, I pulled
a hair out of it that'd make your
arm pit proud.

Neal holds back a violent urge to wretch.

DEL
Is that a fact?

WAITRESS
(with great relish)
It was black and shiny and curly
as a pig's tail.

Neal squeezes his hand over his mouth.

DEL
You shouldn't have said that,
sweetie. I'm with the Dept. of
Agriculture and I believe a big,
black, curly arm pit hair in the
oatmeal violates just about every
health law I'm sworn to uphold.

Neal gags and chokes.

DEL

I believe your boss would rather see you tear up that check than face a possible loss of his operating license. Do you have any idea of the amount of vermin a human hair is host to?

Neal dashes from the booth.

DEL

If he dies, you'll be doing your smarting off to the boys at the big house.

She picks up the check and tears it in two.

87 EXT. MOTEL. DAY

Del and Neal are sitting on Del's trunk in front of the motel.

EXT. MOTEL. DEL AND NEAL

They're waiting.

DEL

If you'd like to take another run at breakfast, we still have six fifty.

Neal stares at him.

DEL

Let me know. Hey, I was thinking, we're dealing with a small time crook here. He didn't bother with the credit cards. We'll charge our way home. What kind of plastic do you carry?

NEAL

He's not too small time, he stole my American Express card and was smart enough to replace it with something that looked like an American Express card. A rather clever way to keep me from reporting the card stolen. I have a Visa card, a gasoline card and a Neiman Marcus card in case we need to buy a gift for someone. What do you carry?

DEL

Chalmer's Big and Tall Men's Store. It's a seven outlet chain in the Pacific Northwest.

DEL

So we charge our way home on my credit cards?

DEL

Do you have any checks?

NEAL

My wife keeps the checkbook. You?

DEL

Strictly cash. I travel too much to write checks. 99% of them would be out of state and an out of state check is about as welcome as a priest in a whorehouse.

NEAL

Never mind. You get me to the train station, I'll take care of everything else.

DEL

Got it covered. Gus's son's driving us.

Del looks at his watch.

NEAL

If Gus is your friend why didn't you ask him for a loan?

DEL

He doesn't have a pot to piss in. I can't take money from him. I have a long standing policy against borrowing money from friends.

NEAL

But it's okay to borrow from strangers like me, huh?

DEL

It's an incentive for you to become my friend.

EXT. MOTEL

An old pick-up truck pulls up in front of the motel and blows it's horn.

TB
REV: 2/6/87

NEAL AND DEL

They look at the truck, then at each other.

NEAL

Is that him?

Del calls to the driver.

DEL

Are you Gus's son?

HIS POV

A strange, gangly young man, OWEN, looks out the truck at him. Beside him is a TWO YEAR -OLD standing on the seat and his WIFE with a BABY in her arms.

OWEN

I'm Owen. You the shower curtain fella?

EXT. MOTEL

Del and Neal get up from the trunk.

DEL

That's me. Del Griffith and this is Neal Page.

Owen wipes his nose and offers Neal his hand. Neal embraces Owen.

OWEN

(to Del)

He's a friendly fella, huh?

(to both)

Pleased to meet you both. This is my kid and that's my wife and that's my baby.

Neal and Del nod to the wife.

OWEN

You don't gotta say nothin' to her. She's dumb as a melon and she don't remember nothin'. I'm to drive you to Wichita to catch the train?

DEL

Yeah. I really appreciate it.

OWEN

The train don't run out of Wichita unless you're a hog or a cattle.

(pause)

People trains runs out of Newton.

TB
REV: 2/6/87

64A.

DEL

No problem.

Del and Neal stoop to lift the trunk.

OWEN

Don't bother with that.

He turns and barks at his wife.

OWEN

Get your lazy behind out here and put that trunk in the back!

Neal and Del quickly intercede.

NEAL

We got it!

OWEN

She don't mind. She's short and skinny but she's strong. Her first baby come out sideways and she didn't scream or nothin'.

DEL

No, no. We've got it.

They mask their pain as they lift the trunk and hoist it into the truck. Barely. They quickly load the other bags.

OWEN

Come on up front!

(barks at the wife)

Get you and them kids in back so the guests ride up front out of the cold!

The wife opens the door to get out. Del and Neal jump into the truck.

NEAL

No problem! We're fine.

OWEN

She don't mind. She resists the cold real good.

WIFE

Sometimes I sleep naked.

The conversation stops dead.

DEL

Isn't that fun. Well... we'll ride in back, no problem.

(to Neal)

Let's go.

NEAL

We're riding back here?

DEL

I guess.

NEAL

Do you know how much this suit cost?

Owen shrugs.

OWEN

She already push started the truck
this morning, she's got used to
the cold already.

DEL

It's very kind of you and of her.
But we can use a little fresh air.

OWEN

(to his wife)
Get down and help the guests
into the back!

Wife gets down on all fours.

DEL & NEAL

NO!

DEL

(to Neal)
One knee.

Neal drops to a knee. Del steps up on Neal's knee and
gets into the truck. Del and Neal settle down on the
trunk. Owen gets in the truck and throws it in gear.
The truck pulls out on the highway.

88 EXT. TRUCK. DAY

Del and Neal are buffeted by the frigid wind. They're
huddled close together and bundled tight.

DEL

You don't mind do you? I'd hate
to sit inside knowing that poor
gal's out here freezing her buns
off.

NEAL

What do you think I am? I have
a heart.

DEL

I only ask because Newton's a
little further than Wichita.

NEAL

How much further?

DEL

(timidly)
Thirty miles.

89 EXT. DOWNTOWN WICHITA. TRAIN DEPOT. DAY

The truck pulls up at the depot. Del and Neal are frozen. Their hair is standing on end. They slowly rise off the trunk and step down from the truck. Owen and his wife get out of the truck and walk around to the back. Owen opens the gate. His teensy wife picks up the trunk and carries it into the depot. Del and Neal grab the other bags with frozen fingers.

90 EXT. DEPOT. TRAIN. DAY

Neal gives Del his ticket.

NEAL
They didn't have two together.
So...

Neal offers his hand. Del takes it.

NEAL
If I don't see you again, take
care.

DEL
You too. But I'll probably see
you on the train.

NEAL
I'm going to sleep if I can. But
anyway, it's been kind of fun.

DEL
It was a laugh. Good luck to you.
And thanks. Oh! Wait! Give me
your address so I can pay you back
for the ticket.

NEAL
The ticket's a gift.

DEL
Come on. Give me your address.

NEAL
Del, it's a gift.

DEL
Give me your phone number so at
least I can find out if you got
home okay.

NEAL
I'll get home okay. But thanks
for the concern. Happy Holidays.

Neal pats Del on the back and boards the train. Del
watches him board. There's a little sadness. He misses
Neal already. He looks at his ticket and waddles down the
siding. He boards another car.

91 INT. TRAIN CAR. DAY

Neal places his briefcase in the overhead baggage
compartment and sits down in the window seat. He settles
into the seat. He sighs with relief. Glad to be seated,
glad to be headed home. Glad to be rid of Del. Not in a
mean way. Just glad to be on his own, going back to his
own life. He closes his eyes.

Del puts his briefcase under the seat and settles into the seat.

DEL

Miss me?

92 EXT. TRAIN

The train rolls across the countryside.

INT. TRAIN. LATER

Del has visited the bar car and has a large cup of beer and several packets of nuts. He shakes the nuts in his fist and pops them in his mouth. Neal's sleeping. Del looks at him warmly. As a mother might to a sleeping child. He reaches under the seat and pulls out his coat. He gently lays it across Neal, careful not to spill the beer he holds in one hand. He tucks the coat around Neal. Neal smiles and settles into the warm coat. Suddenly, the train bucks. Del drops the beer. Neal sits bolt upright.

CU. NEAL'S SHOES

The beer cup is overturned on Neal's foot.

93 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. TRAIN

Smoke's billowing out of the engine. A perplexed crew is watching the fire.

EXT. TRAIN. PASSENGER CARS

Passengers are climbing down off the train. A baggage handler is heaving baggage off the train into the snow.

CU. FEET

Shoes and feet of all description negotiate the frozen lumps of soil and corn stubble of a plowed field. Neal's pathetic pumps trudge past. Every several steps, the beer soaked foot is given a good shake. Del's sturdy, practical boots keep pace.

94 EXT. FIELD. DAY

Del and Neal are trudging across the frozen field, bags in hand, sharing the burden of Del's trunk. WE WIDEN TO REVEAL a long line of passengers marching across a vast snowfield like the German Army in retreat from the Russian front.

95 EXT. JEFFERSON CITY, MO. DAY

The Missouri capital.

96 EXT. BUS DEPOT. DAY

The Greyhound main terminal.

97 INT. BUS DEPOT. DAY

Del and Neal are sitting on benches in the seedy terminal.

DEL AND NEAL

Del looks at Neal. Neal's bubbling with anger. He looks at his watch. Del looks at his.

DEL

It's not my fault the train caught on fire.

Neal looks at him. He's not so sure.

DEL

Thank your lucky stars it didn't derail. They derail more often than they catch fire.

NEAL

It's three fifteen.

DEL

The bus leaves at four. We're alright. Have you ever thought of going with the flow?

NEAL

I am going with the flow and you're what floated into my life.

Del resents the sharp remark.

DEL

If it weren't for me, Mr. Ungrateful, you'd still be at the Wichita airport.

NEAL

Instead I'm in the Jefferson City bus terminal. Tell me how that's an improvement?

DEL

You're a couple hundred miles closer to home.

NEAL

And I'm out seven hundred bucks cash, two hundred and fifty in train tickets...

DEL

They're mailing you a refund.

NEAL

Alot of good that does me here.

DEL

You're in a pretty lousy mood,
huh?

NEAL

To say the least.

DEL

You ever travelled by bus?

Neal shakes his head, no.

DEL

Your mood's probably not going
to improve much.

98 INT. BUS. DAY

Jammed with cut-rate passengers. Screaming BABIES, luggage everywhere, food wrappers, a dozen SERVICEMEN with their Walkman's leaking twelve different songs. CHILDREN cruising the aisles. The engine is ROARING. Someone has a window open. It's hell on wheels.

DEL AND NEAL

They're toward the back. Neal has a seat in his lap. The person in front of him has the seat all the way back and is sleeping. Del's eating popcorn. Neal's staring out the filthy window. Del pokes Neal. Neal looks at him. Del jerks his head toward the seats opposite them. Neal looks.

HIS POV

A sleazy, young couple are furiously necking in the seats. His hands are all over her. Inside her clothes, outside her clothes, squeezing, rubbing, stroking.

DEL AND NEAL

They're both watching.

DEL

Beats a movie, huh?

Neal stares at him.

DEL

Beggars can't be choosers, Neal.
It's better than walking.

NEAL

Barely.

A child's hand squeezes between Del and Neal's seats and fishes around.

DEL
This is probably as good a time
as any to tell you something.

Neal leans back to avoid the child's dirty, probing
fingers.

NEAL
What now?

DEL
You'll probably be relieved.
Seeing as how you're not enjoying
bus travel.

NEAL
(suspicious)
What?

DEL
Our tickets are only good to St.
Louis.

Neal's jaw drops.

DEL
St. Louis into Chi is booked
tighter than Tom Thumb's ass.
Don't forget, it's Thanksgiving.

CU. NEAL

He turns away and strokes his brow. Something catches his
eye.

HIS POV

The couple across the aisle have finished their activities.
He's lighting her cigarette off of his. He hands it to her
and they inhale with great relief and pleasure.

99 EXT. ST. LOUIS BUS STATION.. DAY

Crowded with holiday traffic.

CU. DEL

A big smile on his face.

DEL
Those earrings were made by hand
for the Grand Wizard of China.
That's solid pastel Ivory over
a core of 14k gold and diamond
chips.

(more)

DEL (Cont'd)

And not only do they look smashing, they prevent headaches and make your perfume hold it's scent longer.

He finishes his pitch with a toothy grin.

CU. TRIO OF WOMEN

A large, stocky middle-aged WOMAN, a large stocky WOMAN in her thirties and a stocky TEENAGE GIRL. They're all wearing plastic shower curtain rings in their ears.

100 INT. BUS STATION RESTAURANT. DAY

Del and Neal are eating. Neal is trying to find a way into a chili dog without getting sick to his stomach. His brain says, no, his mouth says, yes. He closes his eyes and bites. Del has no such trouble.

DEL

I'm in the wrong business. You know how many of those damn rings I sold? Dozens. I don't know what got into me but that was a brilliant idea.

Neal takes a slug of beer and washes down the bite of hot dog. He takes another swing and swishes it around his mouth in an attempt to cleanse his palate.

NEAL

You didn't have to sell your samples.

DEL

I've steered you wrong so many times, I felt like a shit burger on a stale bun. The least I could do was scrape up a nice meal for you. Did you call the wife?

NEAL

No one was home. They're probably at my daughter's Thanksgiving pageant.

DEL

It's a bitch you missed it, huh? Those moments are precious.

Neal is coming to a realization. Something he's known for awhile but hasn't admitted to.

NEAL

I've been spending too much time away from home.

DEL

I haven't been home in years.

NEAL

Seriously?

DEL

He didn't want to say what he did. A slip of the tongue. He quickly gets off the subject.

DEL

Figure of speech. Listen, I called an old friend at Eastern Airlines. He says the chances of getting a flight into Chicago from here are about the same as a mouse sexually satisfying a black rhino.

NEAL

I know. I called all the airlines.

DEL

Did you call your office? Maybe they have some clout. You have a company plane?

NEAL

No. The office closed at noon.

DEL

We're still sitting on over a hundred beans from my brilliant idea.

NEAL

I don't feel right taking your money.

DEL

I didn't exactly come by it honestly. You know, there's another option open to us. I have friends here in town. I'll bet if we called, they'd put us up.

Neal shakes his head, no. What Neal has to say comes hard.

NEAL

I've been thinking, Del. When we put our heads together we get nowhere. I think I'm holding you up.

DEL

I'm enjoying your company. You're not that bad. You don't react to crisis very well, but I can overlook that. You have plenty of other admirable traits.

NEAL

I think we'd probably both get home a lot sooner if we split up.

Del's face drops. He's hurt. He's enjoying the adventure.

DEL

I don't see it like that.

NEAL

I really think we'll both get where we're going a lot faster on our own.

Del looks down at his plate.

DEL

Okay.

There's a long pause.

DEL

In other words, I'm a pain in the ass.

NEAL

No, not at all.

DEL

Yeah, I am. Everything I touch turns to shit. My mother used to tell me I had twice as much heart as brain.

He looks up at Neal.

DEL

I was only trying to help.

NEAL

I know, Del. And I appreciate it.

DEL
If I can count you as my friend,
I'm happy.

Del drops his napkin on his plate. He looks at the check, lays down the appropriate sum plus tip. He counts out half the remaining money and puts it in his pocket. He gets up and stuffs the other half in Neal's suitcoat pocket. He pats him on the shoulder.

NEAL
I can't take your money.

DEL
Take it. Buy your kids a
chocolate turkey.

NEAL
You take it. Buy your kids
something.

DEL
I already did. Have a happy
holiday.

He shuffles out of the restaurant. Neal watches him go with a sad but final smile.

101 EXT. ST. LOUIS AIRPORT. DAY

Jammed with activity.

102 INT. AIRPORT. RENTAL CAR COUNTER. DAY

It's jammed with people. Huge lines. Deafening din. Neal's at the counter filling out the forms.

103 EXT. AIRPORT. ARRIVAL AREA. DAY

Neal's at the curb with a group of people waiting for the courtesy bus. For the first time since the GM building, he's smiling. He's so light in spirit, he strikes up a conversation with a young BUSINESS MAN standing next to him.

NEAL
You have no idea what I've been
through to get here.

MAN
You have no idea what I've been
through.

NEAL
It can't come close to what I've
been through.

MAN

I had my foot amputated on
Thursday.

Neal is shocked. There's a long, uncomfortable pause.

NEAL

Other than that, are you looking
forward to a nice holiday?

MAN

Oh, very much so. You know,
looking on the bright side of
things. My feet are only half
as cold as yours.

He chuckles. Neal manages a grim smile.

104 EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY

A car rental courtesy van leaves the airport, heading for
the remote car pick-up.

105 INT. COURTESY BUS. DAY

Two sofas, end tables and lamps. It's packed with weary
travellers. Neal included. He's squeezed in between two
nuns. The van jerks to a stop. A BURLY BLACK DRIVER calls
out Neal's name.

DRIVER

Mr. Page?

Neal gets up and squishes his way up to the front. The
driver hands Neal his rental agreement envelope and a set
of keys.

DRIVER

Red Mustang. Space E-67

NEAL

Thanks. Have a nice holiday.

DRIVER

Are you kidding? You have a nice
holiday. While you're stuffing
your gullet with turkey, I'll be
riding around in this goddamn
living room on wheels.

NEAL

Well, have a nice day.

DRIVER

The day's shot. This is my last run. I drop you off and go home to four walls and a 14 year-old Doberman Pinscher with a bladder infection.

He sits down and opens the door. Neal steps down off the van.

106 EXT. PARKING LOT. DAY

The van pulls away. Neal looks at the envelope. Then at the parking lot.

HIS POV

A vast expanse of parked rental cars.

NEAL

He starts down the row of cars, looking at the large, white stall numbers painted on the pavement.

HIS POV

MOVING past the backs of the parked cars.

NEAL

He stops. Looks down. Looks at the rental agreement.

HIS POV

In large letters on the envelope -- E-67

NEAL

He looks down at the parking slot.

HIS POV

In big, white letters, E-67. No red Mustang. No car at all.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Neal stands in the empty space looking at the keys and the rental agreement.

NEAL

Son of a bitch...

He looks across the parking lot.

HIS POV

The van is several aisles over. One of the passengers gets out and the van turns and heads down another aisle.

NEAL

He takes off after the van, cutting between cars, slipping and sliding through the snow.

NEAL

HEY!

107 EXT. VAN. DAY

The last passenger gets off. The doors close and the van pulls out. A beat and Neal charges after it.

108 EXT. PARKING LOT. WIDE. DAY

The van heads for the parking lot exit with Neal in pursuit.

EXT. PARKING LOT. ENTRANCE

The van pulls out onto the highway.

EXT. PARKING LOT. NEAL

He charges up to the chain-link fence surrounding the lot.

HIS POV

The van speeds past on it's way back to the airport.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Neal drops his briefcase and screams.

109 INT. AIRPORT. ELECTRIC DOORS. NIGHT

The doors open and Neal shuffles in. We start on his expensive Italian shoes and MOVE UP. The shoes are soaked with water, stained with road salt, frayed and torn, a tassel is loose and dragging. We move up to his pant legs. The cuff on one leg is ripped and trailing behind, the fabric is soaked with water and stained with salt and mud. His beautiful trousers are flecked with mud and salt. His overcoat is splattered with water and dirt. He stops as WE LAND ON HIS FACE. It's frozen and speckled with the same salt and grit. His eyes are wild with rage, his teeth are clenched, his hair is standing on end and glistening with frost. He's wrapped his necktie around his head to keep his ears warm. He looks left, then right. His upper lip pulls back and he snarls.

110 INT. AIRPORT. RENTAL CAR COUNTER. NIGHT

A perky, young GIRL is happily tapping on the keys of her computer. She looks up with a big, friendly TV commercial smile. A beat and the smile dissolves.

HER POV

Neal stands before her, crazed, frozen and mad as hell.

CU. GIRL

She manages to put on another giant smile.

GIRL

May I help you?

CU. NEAL

He leans forward. Talks very softly.

NEAL

Yes.

CU. GIRL

She leans forward to hear better.

GIRL

(softly)

How may I help you?

INT. CAR RENTAL COUNTER

He leans a little closer. She leans a little closer.

NEAL

You can start by wiping that fuckin' dumb-ass smile off your rosy fuckin' cheeks.

CU. GIRL

She's stunned.

INT. RENTAL CAR COUNTER.

Neal continues his tirade.

NEAL

Then you can drop the Miss Fuckin' Cheerful bullshit and give me a fuckin' automobile. A fuckin' Mustang, a fuckin' Toyota, a fuckin' Datsun, a fuckin' Chevy, four fuckin' wheels and seat!

The girl regains her composure, clears her throat, fidgets with her uniform scarf.

GIRL

I don't really care for the way
you're talking to me.

NEAL

I don't really care for the way
your fuckin' company left me out
in the middle of fuckin' nowhere
with fuckin' keys to a fuckin'
car that isn't fuckin' there.
And I didn't really care to
fuckin' walk down a fuckin'
highway and across a fuckin'
runway to get back here to have
you smile in my fuckin' face.
I'm a pretty fuckin' nice guy
under normal circumstances and
I have nothing against you except
your fuckin' happy demeanor too
violently illustrates to me how
miserable I am. I want a fuckin'
car, right fuckin' now!

GIRL

Do you still have your rental
agreement?

NEAL

No.

The girl clicks her tongue.

GIRL

Oh, boy.

NEAL

Oh, boy, what?

GIRL

You're fucked.

111 EXT. AIRPORT. ARRIVAL AREA. DAY

Neal trudges out of the airport. His eyes are glazed, he's beyond anger. He walks zombie-like to a cab stand. A burly CAB DISPATCHER addresses him.

DISPATCHER

Where you goin?

NEAL

Chicago.

DISPATCHER
(after a pause)
Chicago?

NEAL
Chicago.

DISPATCHER
Do you know you're in St. Louis?

NEAL
Yes, I know I'm in St. Louis.
And I want to be in Chicago.

DISPATCHER
You want to take a cab to Chicago?

NEAL
Yes, I do.

DISPATCHER
Why don't you try the airlines?
It's alot faster and you get a
free meal.

NEAL
If I wanted a joke, I'd follow
you into the john and watch you
take a leak.

The dispatcher glares at Neal.

DISPATCHER
Listen, butthead, if I gotta look
at your nutty mug for more than
two seconds, you're gonna be
lookin' at me upside and blurry.

NEAL
All I asked for was a cab. It
is possible for a taxi to
transport me to Chicago. I'd much
prefer to fly or drive myself but
due to holiday traffic, those
options are not available to me.
Can you help me or are you going
to stand there like a slab of meat
with mittens?

CU. DISPATCHER

He doesn't much care for Neal's attitude.

DISPATCHER
Time's up.

CU. NEAL

Doesn't understand.

NEAL
Excuse me?

CU. DISPATCHER

He stuffs his cigar in his mouth.

DISPATCHER
You're excused.

He draws back his fist and lets it fly directly into the CAMERA.

CU. NEAL

He drops backward OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. STREET

Neal falls into the street. Lands on his ass in front of a car. The contents of his briefcase go flying. He screams and covers his head. The car skids to a stop, inches from Neal's body. Horns blow, tires screech.

CU. NEAL

Hands over his face. He slowly removes them.

HIS POV

Del Griffith is standing over him, looking down. He's startled.

DEL
Neal?

CU. NEAL

He's equally startled.

NEAL
Del?

EXT. AIRPORT. CAB STAND

Del's relieved to find that Neal's all right.

DEL
If I'd had my sunglasses on, I
would have run right over you.

The dispatcher barks at Del.

DISPATCHER
Get your car outta there!

DEL
Hey, hold your water, wiseass!
We've got an injured man in the
street here. Right under your
damn nose. You get off your fat
duff and help him up. I'll move
my car.

CU. NEAL

He shakes his head in an emphatic, no.

112 INT. CAR. LATER

Del's driving. Neal's next to him. He's cleansing off his
face with a handkerchief.

DEL
I had a feeling when we parted
ways that somehow, someday, our
paths would cross again.

Neal stares at him. He's not happy.

DEL
Are you all right? I never saw
a guy get picked up by the
testicles before.

Neal holds his angry stare.

DEL
That son of a bitch was mad! I
swear if that cop hadn't strolled
past, you'd be lifting up your
balls to tie your shoes.

Neal continues to stare.

DEL
Do you have any idea how glad I
am that I didn't kill you?

NEAL
(after a long pause)
Do you have any idea how glad I'd
be if you had?

DEL
Hey! You don't mean that. You
remember what I said about going
with the flow a little more?

NEAL

How do I go with the flow when
the rental car agency leaves me
in a hundred acre parking lot with
keys to a car the isn't there and
I have to walk three miles back
to find out they don't have any
more cars?

DEL

I got a car. I didn't have to
waste one drop of sweat.

NEAL

Well, Del, you're a charmed man.

DEL

Nope.

NEAL

You just go with the flow.

DEL

Like a twig on the shoulders of
a mighty stream.

He puts his arm on the seat and slams the hammer down.

113 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

A massive green Lincoln speeds past. Del's steamer trunk
is hanging out the back of the car trunk which is secured
with a length of twine.

A114 INT. NEAL'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM

Both sets of grandparents, the kids and Susan are having
dinner. Susan is sullen and withdrawn, paying only cursory
interest to the conversation.

MARTIN

I thought Marti did a wonderful
job with her poem today.

WALT

It's a shame your Dad missed it.

JOY

(sharply)

I'm sure he feels the same way,
Walt.

SUSAN

He'll see the video tape.

WALT

That's no way to watch a kid
grow up.

Joy fires Walt a cold look to shut him up.

PEG

I was so proud of you, Marti.

LITTLE NEAL

Grandma, she missed about eight
words.

MARTI

I did not!

SUSAN

That's enough.

LITTLE NEAL

She brutalized a famous poem.

The phone RINGS O.C. Susan slips away from the table.

114 INT. KITCHEN

Susan walks into the kitchen and answers the phone.

SUSAN

Hello?

115 INT. ROADHOUSE. PAY PHONE. NEAL

Neal's on the pay phone in a loud, raucous roadhouse. Behind him we see a stage with a GIRL dancing behind a shower curtain. A packed house cheers her on. Neal has his hand pressed against his ear.

NEAL

Susan?

116 INT. NEAL'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. SUSAN

Susan hears the noise in the background.

SUSAN

Where are you?

117 INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

He strains to hear. Del works his way through the crowd to the phone.

NEAL

Huh?

(pause)

I'm at a pay phone! What?
Some roadside dump. I'm in
Southern Illinois.

Del reaches Neal. He taps his shoulder. Neal looks around at him.

NEAL
(to Susan)
Hold on.

He covers the phone.

DEL
Do you have five bucks?

NEAL
I'm on with my wife.

DEL
I need a five.

Neal reaches into his pocket and pulls out the last of the money.

NEAL
We only have twenty three bucks left.

DEL
We're fine. Give me five.

Neal fishes out a five.

DEL
Everything okay at home?

NEAL
You gotta be kidding.

Del turns.

NEAL
As soon as I'm off the phone,
we're outta here.

Del looks back and gives him the okay.

118 INT. KITCHEN

Neal comes back on the line.

SUSAN
I'm sitting here with my parents,
with your parents, your kids, and
I want to know what's going on.

119 INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

He squeezes into the corner to shield the phone from the noise.

NEAL

What's going on? I'm trying to get home. I've had the worst day of my life. I've been on a train that caught fire, a bus, the back of a pick-up truck, I walked four miles through the snow with four hundred people...

SUSAN'S VOICE

All I know is, John got home last night.

Neal's mouth drops open.

NEAL

He left after I did. How could he get home?

SUSAN'S VOICE

You tell me. The airport's been open since this morning.

120 INT. KITCHEN

NEAL'S VOICE

You want to hear a dog story?

SUSAN

(to Martin)

He's not making any sense.

Martin takes the phone.

MARTIN

Neal? It's Dad.

121 INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

Drops his anger, cheers up. Excited to hear from his Dad.

NEAL

Hey, Dad! How are you?

MARTIN'S VOICE

Pretty good. And yourself?

NEAL

I'm having a hell of a time getting home but other than that I'm doing alright. When did you guys get in?

MARTIN'S VOICE
This morning.

NEAL
Did you hit any snow?

MARTIN'S VOICE
A little bit. The storm was pretty much just Chicago and north. Other than that it was pretty smooth sailing.

NEAL
Glad to hear it.

122 INT. KITCHEN

Martin covers the phone.

MARTIN
He's making perfect sense. What're you talking about?

Susan takes the phone.

123 INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

Continues talking.

NEAL
Dad? You have to help me out a little. I don't think Susan believes a word I'm saying.

123A INT. KITCHEN

Susan's jaw clenches.

SUSAN
You got that one right.

123B INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

His eyes open wide with alarm.

INT. ROADHOUSE

Del looks over at the phone booth.

HIS POV

Neal lowers the phone and bangs his head on the wall.

123C INT. KITCHEN

Susan has dispatched the last of her patience.

SUSAN

I have a pretty good idea of
what you're pulling, Neal, and
all I can say, is your timing stinks.

NEAL'S VOICE

I'm pulling something? I'm trying
to get home however I can.

SUSAN

(bitter smile)

How's Del.

123D INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

Neal doesn't understand what she's getting at.

NEAL

How's Del?

SUSAN'S VOICE

How's Del?

NEAL

Why do you want to know about Del?
He's fine. A pain in the ass but
why do you want to know about him?

123E INT. KITCHEN

Susan flashes a look into the dining room and then let's
Neal have it.

SUSAN

You just better make sure you don't
come home with his panties in your
briefcase.

123F INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

Neal vastly misinterprets the remark.

NEAL

(with a smile)

Funny you should mention that.
I dried off my face with them
this morning.

123G INT. KITCHEN

Susan slams the phone down.

123H INT. ROADHOUSE. NEAL

Neal listens to the dial tone.

NEAL
Hello? Susan?
(pause)
Shit!

123 EXT. BOOTH. NIGHT

Neal rests his head on the cold glass and hangs up the phone.

124 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The rental car roars into the night.

125 INT. CAR LATER

Neal's driving. Del's trying to get comfortable. He's running through the electric seat positions. It's annoying the hell out of Neal.

NEAL
Could you please not do that with
the seat?

Neal takes wallet out of his pocket and puts it in the glovebox.

DEL
Once you start screwing around
with these damn things, you can't
ever get comfortable.

NEAL
Then quit screwing around with
it.

DEL
I gotta get comfortable. Do you
have a bad back?
(pause)
Well, I do and it hurts like a
bugger. There's a couple good
positions for it...

He raises the seat bottom and lowers the seat back. The motors grind and squeal.

NEAL
Are you trying to break it?

DEL
No, I'm not trying to break it.

A few more tries and he gets the seat the way he wants it.

DEL
There.

He sits for a moment. It's not right.

DEL

No, I'm not trying to break it.

A few more tries and he gets the seat the way he wants it.

DEL

There.

He sits for a moment. It's not right.

DEL

Shit! I got the seat just right but now I can't reach my feet to take off my shoes.

NEAL

That's just fine. Leave your shoes on.

DEL

I can't relax with my shoes on.

NEAL

I don't care to breathe your foot odor. Leave the shoes on.

DEL

When did you smell my feet?

NEAL

At the airport, on the plane, on the train, on the bus, in the motel and I don't care to smell them in the car.

DEL

And I suppose nothing on you smells?

NEAL

Not like that.

DEL

Gee, it must be a swell feeling to be perfect and odor free.

NEAL

I never said I was perfect.

DEL

You don't come right out and say it. You know, there're plenty of things about you that bother me. I, however, am understanding enough to let them pass.

NEAL

Oh, really?

DEL

Yes, really.

NEAL

And what do I do that bothers you?

DEL
Lots of things.

NEAL
Name one.

DEL
You play with your balls.

Neal looks at him. A long stare. Back to the road, back to Del.

NEAL
I don't play with my balls.

DEL
Larry Bird on a good night doesn't do as much ball handling as you do in an hour.

NEAL
Are you tring to start a fight?

DEL
Not at all. I'm just stating a fact. You fiddle with your nuts alot.

NEAL
I've been wearing the same shorts for two days. They're stretched out. They're uncomfortable.

DEL
Okay.

Del settles into the seat and gets comfortable.

NEAL
You know what would make me happy?

DEL
A couple more balls and an extra set of fingers?

NEAL
Now that's humor. What would make me happy is if you'd give your mouth a rest.

DEL
My pleasure.

NEAL
I'd like to have a little silence while I drive.

DEL
No problem.

NEAL
Thank you.

Del closes his eyes. A long beat.

COMPUTER VOICE
THE TRUNK LID IS AJAR. PLEASE
SECURE IT BEFORE PROCEEDING.

NEAL
How do you shut that thing up?

DEL
I guess we secure the trunk lid.

NEAL
It won't close with your goddamn
trunk stuffed in it.

DEL
I guess we'll have to live with
it.

NEAL
You absolutely need that trunk?

DEL
Do you think I'd lug it everywhere
with me if I didn't need it?

NEAL
I don't know why anybody travels
with something like that. What's
in it?

There's a pause.

NEAL
What's in it?

DEL
None of your business.

COMPUTER VOICE
THE TRUNK LID IS AJAR. PLEASE
SECURE IT BEFORE...

Del smacks the dashboard. The RADIO goes on. LOUD and OFF
THE STATION. Neal reaches out to turn it off. He can't
find the knob. He looks at the radio.

HIS POV

There are no dials on the radio. Just a computer pad.

INT. CAR

Del studies the radio. A long beat and he smacks the dash. The radio goes off. Del looks at Neal with a smile. Del settles into the seat and closes his eyes.

COMPUTER VOICE
THE TRUNK LID IS AJAR. PLEASE
SECURE IT BEFORE PROCEEDING.

126 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The car powers past.

127 INT. CAR. LATER

Neal's driving. Del's sound asleep. Snoring like a buzzsaw. Neal's fiddling with the computer on the radio. He manages to switch it on. He fiddles a little more and finds how to raise the volume. He turns up the music to mask the snoring. The snoring gets louder. Neal turns the music up louder. The snoring goes louder. Neal turns the music full blast. He looks at Del. Sleeping like a baby.

NEAL

Del?

No response. He reaches for the electric window buttons. He opens Del's window. Wind whips in. Del doesn't stir. Neal puts down the other windows. No response from Del.

NEAL

DEL! DEL GRIFFITH! HEY!
WAKE UP STUPID! UP AND AT 'EM
LIVER LIPS!

Neal reaches over and pokes Del. He stirs, turns away and closes his mouth. He stops snoring. Neal puts the windows back up. He turns off the radio. Nothing out of Del. He reaches into his lap and adjusts his crotch.

DEL

Just can't leave the walnuts
alone, can you?

Neal freezes.

128 INT. CAFE. NIGHT

Del and Neal are finishing their coffee.

DEL

If you want, I'll drive for a while.

NEAL

That's generous of you considering I've done most of the driving.

DEL

An hour behind the wheel with my back is like a lifetime for you.

Neal grows weary of the bickering. He changes the subject. To what's really bothering him.

NEAL

I can't believe it's Thanksgiving eve and I'm not home with my family.

DEL

Me either.

NEAL

What do you have? Boys or girls?

DEL

(after a pause)

Two boys and a girl.

NEAL

I saw your wife. You got pictures of the kids?

DEL

In my trunk.

NEAL

It's hard being away, isn't it?

DEL

Absolute misery.

NEAL

I haven't seen you call your wife. Isn't she gonna worry?

DEL

Just because you didn't see me, doesn't mean I didn't call her.

NEAL

What's she have to say about all this?

DEL

Complete understanding.

NEAL

You're a lucky man. My wife's ready to kill me.

DEL

That's a shame. A real, true shame.

NEAL

I don't know what I can do. How do you manage to keep your wife so understanding?

DEL

It's real simple. I love her from sun-up to sundown and I make damn sure I don't leave her sight until I'm convinced she knows it. Marriage can be a pretty flexible institution if the two parties involved know without a doubt that the love they give will never be less than the love they receive. It sound like a load of cornball crap but it works like magic.

NEAL

Sounds like you have something pretty special.

DEL

We all have it at the start. Some people just lay it down while they're reaching for other things and when they miss it and go back for it, sometimes they don't remember where they left it.

Neal is silent as he considers Del's speech. Del finishes his coffee.

DEL

Let's roll.

They get up from the table and cross to the cash register. The door opens and a TRUCKER walks in.

TRUCKER

Anybody headed north, think twice. Another big front's moving down. They'll be playing ice hockey on the interstate.

He crosses to the counter. Del looks at Neal. Then at the CASHIER.

DEL
What's the motel situation?

CASHIER
Pretty good. Ethyl's Motor
Mattress always has an open bed
or two.

NEAL
Del, forget it. We'll take it
easy. It'll be fine. Pay the
lady.

DEL
Do you take credit cards?

CASHIER
Diner's Club, Visa,
Mastercharge...

Del pats Neal on the back.

DEL
Let's conserve the cash.

129 EXT. RESTAURANT. LATER

Del and Neal come out of the restaurant. Del gets in the
driver's side. Neal gets in the passenger side.

Del fires up the engine and whips the Versailles out of the
parking space and squeals away.

130 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Del's driving. Neal's almost flat on his back. He has
suitcoat off. He's trying to get the seat up. It rocks,
catches, slips, catches, slips, twists to one side, twists
to the other.

DEL
I really think we're pressing our
luck driving into the teeth of
a storm.

NEAL
You broke the seat! You broke
the goddamn seat! I knew it!

The motor whines as Neal holds his finger on the button.

DEL
It was fine when I got out.

NEAL
You messed around with it until
you broke it!

DEL
You want to drive?

NEAL
No, I don't. Why did you have
to do this?

The gears suddenly catch and vault Neal forward and lock
him with his head to his knees.

DEL
I can't be held responsible for
faulty engineering.

NEAL
This is great. Very comfortable.

He presses the button again. The gears grind and the seat
falls back flat. Neal crosses his arms on his chest.

DEL
You like country music?

NEAL
I detest country music.

DEL
I listened to your rock and roll
oldies rubbish.

NEAL
I'm not going to argue with you.
Put on whatever you like. Just keep
it soft. I'd like to get a little sleep.

Del flips on the radio and starts scanning the dial. Two
second bursts of music and talk. Up and down the FM band.
He hits the AM band and travels it up and down.

NEAL
Find the goddamn station!

DEL
I'm sorry I don't have the
worldwide radio network committed
to memory.

He flips back to FM.

NEAL
Aw, come on!

Del turns off the radio.

NEAL
What?

DEL

Forget it. You're such a miserable asshole, I don't want to aggravate you anymore than you already are.

NEAL

I'm not miserable. Turn on the radio and find your station.

DEL

Forget it. I'm not in the mood for music anymore.

NEAL

Fine.

DEL

I was. But you ruined it. I guess I better consult with you from now on about how you want me to behave so that you'll be comfortable. Afterall, I only rented the car. You're the almighty passenger.

NEAL

Put on the radio.

DEL

Forget it.

NEAL

Put it on.

DEL

I'd rather not.

NEAL

Don't play games, Del. Put on the radio.

Del doesn't react. Neal leans forward, does a sit up and flips on the radio. He scans down the dial until he hears the plaintive howl of a steel guitar. He leans back.

DEL

Thanks, Neal.

NEAL

My pleasure.

He reaches into the back seat and grabs his overcoat. He uses it as a blanket. He settles into the seat and closes his eyes. Del pushes the cigarette lighter in. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a cigarette. The lighter pops and lights the smoke.

DEL
Does my smoke bother you?

NEAL
Not if you crack your window a
little.

Del presses the window button. He opens the window a
crack. It howls.

DEL
Is that too noisy?

NEAL
Close it more or open it more.

DEL
If I close it more, it'll be
closed completely.

He opens the window further. Cold wind rushes in.

DEL
I'll pump the heat, okay?

NEAL
Fine.

Del blasts the heater fan. Double the noise. He turns up
the music above the rush of wind and the roar of the fan.

DEL
Get a little shut-eye so you'll
be fresh for your shift.

NEAL
I'LL TRY.

Del shifts in his seat, puffs his cigarette.

131 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The car hurtles down the lonely interstate into the dark of
the approaching storm.

132 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Neal's fallen asleep. Del takes a last puff on the
cigarette and carefully slips it out the window. He flicks
it away.

INT. CAR. BACKSEAT

The butt is sucked back in the window and lands in the back
behind the backseat. The window snaps shut.

INT. CAR

Del bobs his head to the music. He's feeling heavily bored. He taps the steering wheel to the beat. Flicks his brights on and off to the beat.

EXT. CAR

From the front lights going to the beat.

INT. CAR

It's getting a little warm in the car. He turns off the fan. Drives a bit further. Still too warm. He looks at Neal. He's asleep. He doesn't want to open the window for fear of waking him with the noise. He raises his knees to the steering wheel and attempts to remove his coat.

133 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The car from the front. It swerves a little to the left, then back to the right.

134 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Del has his arms around behind his back trying to get his arms out of the sleeves. As he presses back in the seat, his foot buries the accelerator.

CU. PEDALS

The accelerator is on the floor.

135 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The car screams past.

136 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Del's steering with his knees, streaking down the highway. He's struggling with his arms. He suddenly realizes that he has a huge problem. He twists to the side.

CU. DEL'S HANDS

In trying to take off his coat, he's managed to slip his hands into the epaulets on the cuffs of his overcoat and has effectively handcuffed himself.

INT. CAR

Del struggles to free his hands, driving with his knees. Neal's asleep, oblivious to everything. He looks at Neal to make sure he's not witnessing this latest screw-up.

137 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The car's roaring along. It glides across two lanes and shoots up an exit ramp.

138 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Del rips his hands free, grabs the wheel and hits the brakes. He slams his eyes shut and SCREAMS. The braking force throws Neal and the seat back forward locking him forward with his head between his knees. Windshield cleaners go on or windows fog up making it hard to see out.

139 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The car does a 180 and grinds to a halt in a cloud of tire smoke. It comes to rest across the overpass road, pointing toward the ramp it just came up. The engine shudders and dies.

140 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Neal's bent over with the locked seat back holding him doubled over. Del is as white as a baby's bottom. Speechless, pumped full of adrenaline, Neal looks at him.

NEAL

What the hell are you doing?

Del looks at him with eyes wide and wild. Executes a quick recovery.

DEL

You almost had venison in your lap. The biggest deer. I ever saw. At least a ten point buck. Standing in the middle of the highway looking at me like I was a doe in heat.

Neal stares at him.

DEL

If I'd hit it, we'd be human hash. Go back to sleep. We're making good time.

NEAL

I'm stuck.

DEL

Try the button.

Neal tries it. It just whines.

DEL

Keep your finger on it.

The motor continues to whine. Something catches. The back moves to a normal position but the seat moves forward. Almost to the dash. It stops.

DEL
You got a choice. Leave well
enough alone or risk a worse
position.

Neal does nothing.

DEL
Good choice.

He starts the engine. Guns it. Huge backfire.

DEL
That wasn't me.

He drops it in gear.

DEL
Go back to sleep. Everything's
under control.

141 EXT. ROAD. NIGHT

The car lurches ahead and heads down the ramp it came up,
heading back onto the highway in the wrong direction.

142 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Del's wide awake. Alert as a bunny. Neal closes his eyes.

CU. BACKSEAT

The area behind the backseat is smoldering.

CU. BACK WINDOW

The plastic convertible top window is melting. A hole is
forming. The smoke is being drawn out of it.

CU. NEAL

He sniffs. Opens his eyes. Looks at Del.

NEAL
You took your shoes off.

CU. DEL

He looks at Neal

DEL
I did not.

INT. CAR

Neal sits up.

NEAL
Then what smells?

DEL
I just hammered the brakes
something fierce, it's probably
tire rubber.

NEAL
It really smells bad.

DEL
Hey, since the car already
stinks...

NEAL
Keep your shoes on.

DEL
Just checking.

Neal settles back in. Del puts his arm up on the seat and starts to whistle.

INT. CAR. CROSS ANGLE

Across Del to Neal and out the passenger window. We see a car riding alongside theirs. It's across the median strip. Del glances across. Sees the car. Smiles. Puts a little more juice into it. The car running alongside him blows it's horn. Del chuckles. He blows his horn and puts the hammer down a little more. Neal sits up and looks at Del.

NEAL
What's going on?

DEL
Some joker wants to race.

He motions his head to the other car. It's horn is blaring. Del lays on his horn and slams the accelerator to the floor. Neal looks out the window.

HIS POV

A sedan is keeping pace across the grass strip dividing the highway. The driver has his window down and is waving his arm furiously.

INT. CAR. DEL

He's looking out the passenger window.

DEL
Is he waving to you? You know him?

CU. NEAL

He's watching the car.

HIS POV

The car running alongside. The driver's screaming.

CU. NEAL

He cups his hand to his ear.

NEAL

He wants something.

CU. DEL

He shoots a look out the window.

DEL

Maybe he's drunk.

CU. NEAL

He puts his window down.

HIS POV

The driver's screaming.

CU. NEAL

He screams back.

NEAL

WHAT?!

HIS POV

The driver keeps screaming.

CU. NEAL

He can't quite make out what the guy's screaming.

NEAL

WRONG WHAT?!

HIS POV

The driver continues hollering.

CU. NEAL

He sticks his head out the window.

NEAL

WHAT?!

HIS POV

The driver shrieks.

INT. CAR

Neal pulls his head back in the window. He looks at Del.

NEAL

He says we're going the wrong way.

DEL

He's drunk. How would he know
where we're going?

Neal shrugs. A long beat as things suddenly come into focus. Neal snaps his head around and looks out the window.

HIS POV

The screaming driver. POV shifts down to the median strip. The grassy ditch flying past.

CU. NEAL

It hits him. His eyes bug-out. He snaps his head forward. ..

143 EXT. HIGHWAY. FURTHER AHEAD. NIGHT

A pair of ten-wheelers racing up a hill, side-by-side.

144 INT. CAR. NIGHT

Neal screams. Del looks at him.

DEL

Do you know him?

Neal points ahead. Del looks back to the road.

THEIR POV

Four huge, bright sets of headlights breaking the crest of the hill.

CU. DEL

Slams his eyes shut.

CU. NEAL

Eyes frozen open their widest.

CU. DEL'S FOOT

On the brake pedal. To the floor.

145 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The trucks swerve apart to avoid the car.

146 EXT. CAR. LEFT SIDE FROM THE REAR. NIGHT

The truck shears off the outside mirror and the fake wood trim on the side of the car.

EXT. CAR. RIGHT SIDE FROM THE REAR

The other truck shears off the other mirror and the trim.

147 INT. CAR. DEL AND NEAL. NIGHT

SHRIEKING AT THE TOPS OF THEIR VOICES.

148 EXT. HIGHWAY. TRUCKS. FROM BEHIND. NIGHT

The trucks come back together and continue down the highway.

149 EXT. CAR. FROM THE FRONT. NIGHT

The car jerks to a violent stop.

EXT. CAR. FROM THE REAR

The force of the sudden stop sends the trunk hurtling forward. It rips the trunk lid off and sails over the top of the car.

150 INT. CAR. BACKSEAT PAST DEL AND NEAL NIGHT

Out the windshield, we see the trunk crash down on the hood of the car and sail down the highway on the top of the trunk lid, sparks shooting out from beneath. The trunk and the trunk lid glide down the hill like a runaway toboggan.

INT. CAR

The steering wheel's bent over. Del's hands are gripping it. Neal's fingers are embedded in the padded dash.

DEL

I think it's time for you to drive, Neal.

Neal looks at him.

DEL
I'm getting a little tired. And
now my back really hurts.

Neal looks at his watch.

NEAL
If it wasn't Thanksgiving, I'd
kill you.

DEL
You don't mean that do you?

NEAL
Yes, I do.

COMPUTER VOICE
THE TRUNK LID IS AJAR. PLEASE
SECURE IT BEFORE PROCEEDING.

Neal draws back and punches the dashboard. The computer
voice continues. But it's pitched higher and severely
crimped.

COMPUTER VOICE
SECURE PROCEEDING IS THE TRUNK
PROCEEDING BEFORE IT TRUNK PLEASE
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE
PLEASE...

151 EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The car pulls slowly around to the side of the road and
comes to a stop pointing in the correct direction. The
doors open and Neal and Del get out. They walk around
behind the car and look at the hole where once there was
a trunk lid. The COMPUTER VOICE CONTINUES INSIDE. REPEATING
THE WORD "PLEASE"

DEL
We could make a jacuzzi out of
it.

Neal looks at him. He isn't interested in jokes.

DEL
I'll get my trunk.

He heads down the road. He bends down and picks up his
suitcase which has been thrown clear of the car. He sets
it upright on the side of the road. He grabs his back, groans.

DEL
Oh, Jesus. My back!

He rubs the small of his back and continues.

DEL

I'm okay, oh Lord...

He picks up his briefcase and sets it to the side. He continues down the road.

CU. NEAL

He sighs. He can't let Del drag the trunk back by himself.

EXT, HIGHWAY

Neal follows after Del. As he heads down the highway, we see flames erupt in the backseat of the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Del hobbles toward the trunk. Neal's behind him. In the background we see the interior of the car engulfed in flame. Del stops at the trunk. He grabs one end and drags it to the shoulder. Neal picks up the trunk lid. He carries it to the shoulder and drops it on top of the trunk. He grabs one end. Del grabs the other. They lift and turn to face the car.

They drop the trunk.

THEIR POV

The car's ragtop is on fire.

CU. DEL

He can't figure why the car's burning.

CU. NEAL

Complete mystification.

NEAL AND DEL

They watch the car burn.

NEAL

Why is the car on fire?

Del shakes his head.

DEL

I don't know.

NEAL

My suitcase is in the backseat.

DEL

So is your briefcase.

NEAL

And my wallet.

Del looks at Neal.

DEL

And your suit coat. It was a beautiful garment.

NEAL

I'll bet my left nut you did that with one of your cigarettes.

DEL

I don't think so. I only had one. I made sure I tossed it out.

NEAL

What I smelled before was the car. Burning plastic. I'll bet you threw the cigarette out and it came back in.

DEL

I doubt it. I'm pretty careful. But I've been wrong before. At any rate, I'm sorry.

Neal let's out a chuckle.

DEL

(smiles)

What?

Neal continues laughing.

DEL

(starts to laugh)

What?

NEAL

Good luck turning the car in. They'll be happy as pigs in shit to see you.

Breaks up. Del breaks up. Something occurs to Neal
Del keeps laughing.

NEAL

How could you rent a car without a credit card?

DEL

Huh?

NEAL

You couldn't. How'd you get the car?

Del stops laughing.

DEL

I gave the girl with the
cute cheeks a set of shower
curtain rings.

NEAL

You don't rent a car with
shower curtain rings, Del.

Del knows he's caught.

DEL

What do you want me to say?

NEAL
I'm giving you a chance to
explain.

DEL
Somehow your American Express card
wound up in my wallet.

NEAL
You stole my card.

DEL
Not exactly. I swear on my life,
I don't know how it got in there.
I thought maybe you put it in my
wallet.

NEAL
Why would I do that?

DEL
Kindness?

NEAL
(yells)
You stole it!

DEL
I was going to send it back to
you with whatever the car rental
charge was plus interest but you
wouldn't give me your address. I'm
sorry. I was stuck. You ditched me.
I had no money. No cards.

NEAL
Give it back.

DEL
I can't.

NEAL
Why not?

DEL
(after a pause)
When we stopped for gas, I put
it back in your wallet.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The interior and the roof of the car is burning bright.

152 EXT. MOTEL. NIGHT

A chain motel. Big, bright sign. The charred car pulls up
in front. All that remains of the roof is a twisted black
frame. Neal's driving. He's wearing one of Del's
sportcoats and a stocking cap.

Del's wearing his overcoat and a couple sweaters, earmuffs and a black fake angora hat.

153 INT. CAR. NIGHT
2

The interior is completely charred. They're sitting on bare, burned springs.

DEL
Are you still mad at me?

Neal doesn't say a word.

DEL
You know, you could have killed
me slugging me in the stomach when
I wasn't ready.

Neal opens the door and gets out.

DEL
With all this fresh air, we're
going to sleep like babies.

154 INT. MOTEL. NIGHT

Neal walks into the motel. He looks like an Alaskan bag person. Del follows him in. Neal marches up to the counter and knocks on the service window. A sleepy clerk stumbles into the office.

NEAL
I need one room

DEL
If you're stilled pissed, maybe we
should get seperate rooms.

NEAL
You get your room!

The DESK CLERK slides a registration form across the counter. Neal takes the pen and begins filling it in.

CLERK
I need a major credit card.

Neal reaches into his pocket and hands the clerk a charred, melted hunk of plastic.

NEAL
You take American Express?

TB
REV:

He reaches into his other pocket and drops two more melted wads on the counter.

NEAL
Mastercharge? Visa?

The clerk stares at the plastic. Neal finishes the form.

CLERK
These aren't credit cards.

NEAL
They were. We had a small fire in the car and they melted. I'm sorry. I'll pay cash.

CLERK
We need a major credit card.

NEAL
I don't have one. I'm tired. I'm cold, I'm humiliated, my marriage is collapsing, I'm two hundred miles from home on Thanksgiving Eve, my car burned up, I have been insulted, abused, assaulted and robbed. Please have mercy. I've been wearing the same undershorts for three days!

DEL
I can vouch for that.

Neal silences him with an angry sound.

NEAL
Please.

The clerk considers the request.

CLERK
Well...

NEAL
Be a sport. It doesn't cost anything.

CLERK
\$42.50

Neal reaches into his pocket. Counts out his money.

NEAL
How about \$17?

CLERK

I can't do that.

NEAL

How about \$17 and a promise that
I'll send you a check?

CLERK

I don't own the place.

NEAL

How about \$17 and a hell of nice watch?

He takes his watch off. The clerk looks at it.

CLERK

You can't use the phone or the satellite TV either.

NEAL

How about a couple feet of toilet tissue?

The Clerk thinks for a moment. A beat and he nods.

NEAL

Key?

The Clerk turns from the desk and selects a room key. He gives it to Neal.

NEAL

Thanks. Enjoy the watch.
It cost fifteen hundred dollars!

He turns to exit, Del's standing at the door.

DEL

Neal? Do you remember where you got that money?

NEAL

Yep.

DEL

I gave it to you in St. Joe.

NEAL

And I thanked you for it.

DEL

All the time we spent together,
all the things we've been through...

NEAL

Step aside!

DEL

It doesn't mean anything?

NEAL

No.

Neal exits the lobby. Del watches him go. He's crestfallen. The Clerk turns to him.

CLERK

You need a room?

DEL

Yes, I do.

CLERK

Your credit cards all burned up?

DEL

I don't carry credit cards.

CLERK

\$42 and no room service, no phone calls, no satellite TV.

DEL

I don't have \$42.

CLERK

You got \$17 and a good watch?

DEL

I got two bucks and a Casio.

CLERK

Good night.

The Clerk steps away from the counter.

DEL

(holds up his hat)
I'll throw in my hat. It's
a beaut. Warm as all get out.

The Clerk turns out the lights.

155 INT. MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

Neal's sitting on the edge of the bed. He lifts the receiver off the phone. He puts it to his ear and tries to dial. The rotary dial is locked.

NEAL

Damn!

He slams the phone down. He sits for a moment. He gets up and walks to the window. He pulls the curtain aside and looks out.

HIS POV

Del's sitting in the burned-out car. Snowflakes drift down across the parking lot.

CU. NEAL

Shakes his head.

NEAL

What did I do to get hooked-up
with that oaf?

HIS POV

Del hunkers down in the seat and tries to get comfortable.

PEG

That has nothing to do with his being stranded.

SUSAN

He's not stranded, Mother. Quit being so optimistic. He's fallen in love, he's trapped between me and the kids and someone else. He didn't call tonight because he's scared to tell me the truth.

PEG

That's absurd.

SUSAN

Is it?

PEG

Of course it is.

SUSAN

Does anything he's said on the phone over the past two days make sense?

Peg doesn't answer.

SUSAN

The airport's open, the highways are clear, everything's back to normal and where's Neal? Stuck on the road with a salesman? Can you imagine Neal spending three seconds with this character he's described? If he's going to invent someone, for God's sake, he didn't have to go as far from reality as he has.

PEG

Maybe he's embellished it a bit, but...

SUSAN

A bit? Marti comes up with more plausible characters in her nightmares. If Neal wanted to be home, he'd be home. He has money, he has credit cards. There's no good reason he's not here. Except...

PEG

I refuse to believe that Neal would do anything that you're suggesting.

SUSAN

You just don't want to believe it. He doesn't love me. I know it, I accept it. I'm going to put on my best front, give the kids as warm and loving a holiday as I can, then Friday morning, we're gone.

TB

113A.

INT. ROOM. NIGHT

Neal lets the curtain close. He walks back to the bed and gets in.

156 EXT. MOTEL. DEL. NIGHT

He's sitting in the car looking at the motel room. His eyes shift to the heavy skies.

She stands, picks up her tea cup, takes it to the sink and crosses to the door.

SUSAN

He paid for the house, it's his and
he can share it with his darling
Del.

She exits into the dark dining room.

155 INT. MOTEL ROOM

Neal's in bed. He exhales loudly. Fluffs his pillows. Sighs. Fluffs the pillow again. He can't relax. He shifts his body. Lays still for a moment. Then he sits up. He gets out of bed and walks to the window. He pulls the curtain aside and looks out.

HIS POV

Del's sitting in the burned-out car. He's bundled against the cold. Snowflakes drift down on the car and the grounds.

CU. NEAL

A moment of compassion. Then a moment of reason.

NEAL

What did I do to get hooked-up
with that oaf?

HIS POV

Del hunkers down in the seat and tries to get comfortable.

INT. ROOM

Neal takes a last look, lets the curtain fall closed and returns to bed.

156 EXT. MOTEL. DEL. NIGHT

He tilts his head back and looks up into the falling snow
thru the heavy clouds.

DEL

Mario, honey? You were right as rain. I'm the biggest pain in the butt that ever came down the pike. I meet a guy who's company I really enjoy. And I go overboard. Smother the poor soul. Cause him more problems than he has a right to. I'm starting to wonder if I'm ever going to wake up. If I could just see you for a minute, you'd set me right.

(pause)

Good night sweetheart.

He breathes a deep, soulful sigh. He settles into the seat and puts his hat on. The motel door opens. Del shifts his look to the motel. Neal's in the doorway Del doesn't know that Neal wants.

NEAL

You're gonna freeze to death out there.

157 INT. MOTEL ROOM . LATER

Del's sitting in a chair. Neal's on the bed. They're eating sunflower seeds.

DEL

You know how few people give a shit about curtain rings?

NEAL

Who cares about lipstick ads?

DEL

At least you deal with pretty girls. You know what shower rings are?

NEAL

You know what lipstick is?

DEL

When I'm dead and buried all I'll count for is a couple million shower curtain that haven't fallen down. That's some legacy, huh?

NEAL

My life's work is thrown away, burned and recycled. Yours'll last longer than mine.

DEL

What do you pull down a year?

NEAL

I do okay.

DEL

You know what I claimed as income last year?

NEAL

That means nothing. Any second string player in the NFL makes more in a week than Van Gogh made in his lifetime.

DEL

Van Gogh Textiles up in Buffalo?

Neal

No, the painter.

DEL

Oh.

NEAL

Money's no measurement of worth. True worth. Worth to the human race. I know because I have alot of it and don't feel like I'm worth anymore that when I was broke. In fact I probably felt better about myself when I was broke.

DEL

I bang all around this country doing less and less each year. I talk a blue streak but when it comes right down to it, I'm running on fumes. That briefcase I said I got as a sales award? That was twelve years ago.

NEAL

So?

DEL

I've lost half my accounts to a computer catalogue. Every year half a dozen customers retire and the business goes with them. You ever read "Death of a Salesman"?

NEAL

Sure.

DEL

Sometimes I find myself practically quoting Willy Loman. Unconsciously quoting him.

NEAL

He was an older guy. You're young.

DEL

So what? Youth means diddly if you don't have anything to look to but growing old.

NEAL

At the very least, at the absolute minimum, you have a woman you love to grow old with.

Del doesn't reply.

NEAL

You love her, don't you? Your wife?

DEL

Love isn't a big enough word, buddy.

NEAL

So, there you go. Start with that. You know how guys in this world have money and nobody to spend it on?

Del's silent again.

NEAL

Hey, I'm sorry I popped you in the gut.

DEL

I deserved it.

NEAL

No, you didn't.

DEL

Sure I did. If I didn't have one foot in my mouth and the other in a bucket of shit, I wouldn't recognize myself.

NEAL

Well, let me just close the conversation by saying you're one unique individual.

DEL

Unique? That's Latin for asshole.

NEAL

As much trouble as I've had on
this little journey, I'm sure
someday, I'll look back and have
a good laugh.

DEL

Yeah. Maybe.

NEAL

Goodnight.

(pause)

And keep your hands to yourself.

DEL

If I hold anything, it'll be my
own.

Neal rolls overs.

NEAL

You gonna have your smoke?

DEL

No.

NEAL

Quitting?

DEL

My butts burned up in the car.

NEAL

Consider quitting, willya?

DEL

My wife used to say that.

NEAL

When'd she finally stop?

DEL

(remorseful)

Eight years ago march.

NEAL

Good advice. Take it. Night.

A long pause.

DEL

(soft and sad)

Sleep tight.

)

158 EXT. MOTEL. MORNING

The snow storm's blown in and left it's white wrath. The car's filled to the brim with fresh snow.

159 INT. MOTEL ROOM CU. DOOR

We see a fine line of light under the ill-fitting door. Snow has blown under and dusted the carpet.

CU. HEATER

In it's location below an equally ill-fitting window, the heater sports a crown of ice.

INT. MOTEL ROOM. NEAL

Neal's laying on the bed in his underwear, curled into a ball, without a pillow or a stitch of covering. WE MOVE ACROSS TO THE OTHER BED to see Del has both pillows and all the blankets and sheets. Neal wakes with a shiver. He sits up and looks at Del. He grabs up his coat and throws it on. He shivers across to the bathroom and goes inside. Del stirs and emerges from the mount of blankets. He's wearing his coat hat and gloves.

INT. BATHROOM

Neal grabs a toilet brush that's sticking out of the toilet bowl. As he removes it we see a solid half-globe of ice attached to it.

CU. SHOWER

It slides open to reveal Neal.

HIS POV

A grotesque assortment of icicles adorning the shower head. The pipes have burst.

CU. PLASTIC DRINKING CUP

Neal's toothbrush is frozen in the cup.

INT. BEDROOM. DEL

He sits up on the bed and scratches his head.

DEL

Nothing refreshes like a well-ventilated room! Hey, Neal!

NEAL (OC)

You son of a...

DEL

I took the liberty of tossing your shorts in the sink with a little Tide. Wring 'em out and shoot 'em with my hair dryer. They'll be fresh as springtime.

CU. SINK

Neal's shorts are frozen in ice.

CU. NEAL

He looks down at the frozen shorts with a slack, weary jaw.

160 INT. MOTEL. LATER

Neal and Del are in the car. They've scooped the snow out of the front seat. The back is still piled high with snow. A snow plow has cleared the lot, leaving a knee-high wall of snow around the sides and back of the car. Neal has the car in reverse and is gunning the engine. The car's stuck. Wheels spinning. Nothing happening. Neal lets off the gas.

DEL

We're stuck tighter than two dogs on their wedding night.

NEAL

You want to get out and push?

DEL

Sure.

Neal puts the car in park.

NEAL

Forget it. You'll screw up your back.

He gets out of the car. Del slides over the springs to the driver's side. Neal goes around to the front. Del puts the Lincoln in reverse and hits the gas. Neal pushes with all his soul. Nothing. Del lets off the gas.

DEL

We have to rock it. Get along side.

Neal repositions himself on the passenger side. He grips the door handle and the outside mirror. Del drops the car in forward and guns it. Neal pulls on the car. Del shifts quickly to reverse and guns it. Neal pushes. They continue rocking the car back and forth.

DEL

She's starting to grip! A little more. Put your balls into it!

NEAL

I am!

DEL

Squeeze your ass and think of Nazis! We're moving this hunk of shit!

Del throws the car in reverse, it rocks high up on the ice groove.

DEL

One more and we're home free!

He throws the car in forward and guns it. Rocks a little more, catches, leaps forward and plows into the motel fence and one of the pillar's supporting the roof.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

The car smacks the wall, splits the panelling and breaks the window.

EXT. MOTEL LOT

Neal's standing, stunned in the clear spot where the car once was.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

The car backs out of the hole in the wall.

EXT. MOTEL LOT

Neal steps aside as Del plows back INTO FRAME, up over the wall of snow and into the clear. Neal jumps in the car. Del dumps it in forward and they roar out of the lot and spin out onto the highway.

161 EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY

The charred hulk roars down the highway.

162 INT. CAR. DAY

Del's driving. Neal's shotgun. They're freezing their asses off. The heater's pumping full blast. They're shouting to each other over the roar of the wind.

DEL

You ever been to Hawaii?

NEAL

Once.

DEL
Nice?

NEAL
Yeah.

DEL
Marie and I were going there for our honeymoon. We were all set but I got the call from American Light and Fixture. For my job. I not only blame them for all my career misery, I blame them for depriving me and Marie of a honeymoon.

NEAL
You can always go. It's still there.

DEL
How you doing for time?

NEAL
I don't know. I gave up my watch.

DEL
I feel bad about that. Why don't you take mine.

NEAL
It's okay.

DEL
No, really, take it. I'd feel much better.

NEAL
I don't want your watch.

DEL
Not good enough for you?

NEAL
No. Not at all. I just wouldn't feel right taking your watch.

Del lifts his knees again to steer as he takes his hands off the wheel to undo his watch.

DEL
Take it or I'll throw it out on the highway.

NEAL
Just watch the road.

DEL
You're taking the goddamn watch
if I have to shove it down your
throat.

He's having trouble getting it off. He glances down. Then
at the road.

NEAL
Watch the road.

DEL
No problem. After last...
(looks at the watch)
...night, I'm all eyes and ears.
(looks up)
Give me a hand with this damn
thing.

NEAL
I don't want the watch.

DEL
You're making me feel like crap.
You're taking the watch. Here...

He holds out his wrist. Neal takes off a glove and starts
to work on the watch.

DEL
There's a funny little clasp thing
underneath. It's a bitch to get
off.

NEAL
My fingers are so numb...

DEL
Here, right here.

He takes his other hand off the wheel and points to the
clasp.

163 EXT. HIGHWAY. FURTHER AHEAD. DAY

A state police car is parked alongside the road with his
radar gun, clocking motorists. The burned-out car hurtles
past.

CU. COP.

He stares at the semi-destroyed vehicle with the top down,
doing ninety with two guys hunched over in the seats. He
hits the siren and lights.

164 INT. CAR. DAY

Neal drops Del's wrist and turns around.

HIS POV

The police car gaining on them.

INT. CAR. DEL AND NEAL

Neal turns back in a panic.

NEAL

Shit! How fast are you going?

Del looks at the speedometer.

HIS POV

The entire dash is melted.

INT. CAR

Del's hunched-over looking at the speedometer.

DEL

It's hard to say, the speedometer melted.

NEAL

Pull over.

165 EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY

The car rolls to a stop. The cop car pulls up behind it. The cop gets out and saunters up to the Lincoln. He looks it over carefully.

DEL

Top of the morning to you, officer.

NEAL

Hi.

COP

What're you driving here?

DEL

1986 Turbo Gran Detroit Town Car.

The cop looks in the charred backseat.

DEL

We had a small fire last night.

The cop nods.

COP

You know how fast you were going?

DEL

Like I was just telling my friend,
the speedometer melted. It's a
little hard to say with any degree
of accuracy.

COP

How about 98 miles an hour?

DEL

Sounds fair. Like I said, it's
hard to tell. Although, come
to think of it, it sure was windy.

COP

You consider this vehicle fit for
the highway?

DEL

It doesn't look very pretty but
it gets the job done.

COP

No inside mirror, no functioning
gauges.

DEL

The radio works.

COP

What're you fellas up to here?

NEAL

We're just trying to get home for
the holidays

The cop reaches into his pocket, pulls out his ticket book.

COP

Let me see your license.

Del reaches into his coat for his wallet.

COP

I can't let you fellas go on ahead
in this vehicle.

NEAL

You can't what?

COP

It's not fit for the road.

Del hands over his license.

COP

You'll follow me to the station and the vehicle will be impounded until such time as it is made fit for travel on Wisconsin state roads.

DEL

Do you realize it's Thanksgiving?

COP

I got a turkey sandwich in the car, fella. I'm well aware. You boys didn't have a little eye-opener this morning, did you?

Neal's thinking.

DEL

Us? No. Me? I don't drink.

COP

You in the drug business?

DEL

Shower curtain rings. Drugs?

NEAL

Excuse me. Did I hear you correctly?

COP

When I see a vehicle of this sort with a couple of squirrly-looking guys like you in it, I wouldn't be serving my citizenry if I didn't ask a few questions.

NEAL

You said "Wisconsin state highways?"

COP

I believe that's what I said.

NEAL

Why did you say that?

COP

Because you're on a Wisconsin state highway.

Neal looks at Del. He's puzzled.

COP
(suspiciously)
You fellas don't know where you
are?

NEAL
Not exactly. Can you help us out?

COP
You're about six miles outside
of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

NEAL
We overshot Chicago.

DEL
We did?

COP
You gentlemen are under arrest.

166 EXT. SMALL TOWN. COURTHOUSE. DAY

Del and Neal come out the front doors. Neal's limping a
little.

DEL
How do you feel?

NEAL
Oh, just great.

DEL
I've never been strip-searched
before. Thank God you were clean.
That's probably why they didn't
bother checking me out. Just
chalk it up to experience. They
must have checked you pretty good,
you were in there a long time.

NEAL
Why don't you shut-up?

DEL
I'm sorry pal. I really am. I
don't know how in the hell we got
so lost. I was watching those
signs religiously. From now on,
I won't touch a car.

NEAL
We don't have a car anymore, you
dickhead.

DEL
True. I don't think there's much
point in trying to fix it, either.
It's pretty well shot. You have
insurance, right?

They reach the curb where Del's trunk and suitcases are
piled.

NEAL
That's the rental car company's
problem.

DEL
Yeah.
(pause)
Well, maybe not.

NEAL
What do you mean?

DEL
Well, since I was using your card
and I felt guilty about it, I
tried to save you a few bucks.

NEAL
Don't say it, Del. For your
health and safety don't say it.

DEL
I didn't take out any insurance.

167 INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY

Del's holding an ice cube wrapped in a napkin to his eye.
Neal shuffles over to the booth and sits down.

DEL
You know this is twice in less
than twenty four hours that you've
slugged me.

NEAL
I just called my wife and you'll
be happy to know she hung up on
me.

DEL
Oh, no.

Del lowers the ice cube.

NEAL
She didn't believe a word I said.

DEL
I'll be happy to confirm anything
you'd like with her.

NEAL
Dinner hits the table right after
the football game.

He looks at the wall clock.

NEAL
Right now, it's eleven fifteen.

DEL
Let's pray for double overtime.

NEAL
I have a house full of family,
a wife that's ready to kill me...

DEL
Neal, I'm going to step up to this
challenge.

NEAL
Please don't.

DEL
No, I am. I'll have to have you
home before the bird's out of the
oven.

He gets up from the booth.

NEAL
Del, I'm begging you to sit down
and leave the situation alone.

DEL
What can happen? You get home.
Or you don't. Isn't it worth one
last shot?

NEAL
No. Things are bad enough. Leave
it alone.

DEL
Neal, you've hit the rock bottom.
It doesn't get much lower than
having a state trooper shine a
flashlight up your can.

He hurries out of the coffee shop. The handful of patrons
in the coffee shop turn and look at Neal. They've all
overheard Del's remark. Neal smiles meekly.

PATRON

So, you met our Sargeant Kudner,
did you?

The patrons burst into laughter. Neal shrinks in his seat.

PATRON

He's bent as a willow branch in
a hurricane. Happy Thanksgiving
to you, stranger.

The cafe is rocking with howls of laughter.

168 EXT. STREET. LATER

Neal's standing on the corner, leaning against a mailbox,
feeling his misery. He hears the GASP OF AIR BRAKES. He
looks down the street.

HIS POV

A semi rolls to a stop and Del climbs down from the
passenger side.

DEL

Our ship has come in!

CU. NEAL

A wary look.

CU. DEL

He waves Neal on.

DEL

It's free and it's a non-stop!
The guy's a little freaky about
people riding up in his cab but
what the hell do we care? We're
heading home!

169 EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY

The semi rolls across the Wisconsin countryside.

170 INT. TRAILER. DAY

Del and Neal are in the trailer surrounded by wooden
crates.

DEL

Beats walking, huh? We'll be in
Chicago in three hours.

(more)

DEL (Cont'd)
(smacks one of the
crates)
Cheese.

NEAL
Yeah.

DEL
Smells, doesn't it?

Neal nods.

DEL
I guess you wouldn't mind if I
slipped off my shoes now, huh?

Neal shakes his head, no.

DEL
Too bad it's so cold.

A long pause. Neal's not in a mood for any conversation.

DEL
Too bad we don't have a box of
crackers.

Neal stares at Del. He smiles.

171 EXT. CHICAGO. DAY

The truck barrels down the expressway, heading into the city.

172 EXT. DEPOT. DAY

The semi backs into a loading dock.

173 EXT. TRUCK. BACK DOORS. DAY

A hand jigs the lock and swings the doors open. Del and Neal are sitting on Del's trunk.

DEL
We're here! The Toddlin' Town!

174 EXT. LOADING DOCK. DAY

The truck driver hands his waybill to a dock worker. Neal and Del pull the trunk out of the back of the truck.

DRIVER
I'm gonna get a cup of coffee,
you jokers start unloading.

He heads down the dock.

EXT. LOADING DOCK. DEL AND NEAL

Neal looks around slowly at Del. Del smiles.

DEL
Nothin's free in this world.
You're in the advertising
business, you oughta know that.
Right?

Neal holds his stare. Del tries to work his way out of the jam.

DEL
It won't take long. This is
nothing. I once had to wash-out
a cement truck.
(pause)
I'll let you operate the forklift.
You ever operated a forklift?
It's a kick.

175 CU. TV SCREEN

A black and white picture of a football game. Third quarter stats.

INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE. DAY

The driver and the dock worker are in the office watching the game. Del and Neal appear in the doorway.

DEL
We're outta here.

DRIVER
Done?

DEL
Yep.

NEAL
How much time left in the game?

DRIVER
Fourth quarter's just starting.

Del looks at Neal with a smile.

DEL
You're home. It's in the bag.

Neal actually smiles.

176 EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN PLATFORM. DAY

Del and Neal lug the steamer trunk up the stairs. They set it down. Del reaches into his pocket and removes the last of the money.

DEL
I'll pop for the tokens. Where
you headed?

NEAL
Wilmette.

DEL
I'll be right back.

Del shuffles over to the ticket window. Neal tries to straighten himself up. He brushes off his coat and pats his hair down.

177 EXT. PLATFORM. DAY

Del and Neal are on the platform waiting for the trains.

NEAL
I can't say I had a great time
but I can say that after all is
said and done, you did get me
home.

DEL
Next time we'll try to go for a
little more comfort and style.

NEAL
I hope there isn't a next time.

A train pulls into the station.

DEL
This is you.

Neal offers his hand to Del. Del clasps it with both hands.

DEL
You're a hell of a good man, Neal.
I'm sorry for all the trouble I
caused you.

NEAL
It all came out in the wash.
Don't worry about it.

The train pulls to a stop. The doors open.

NEAL
Have a nice holiday.

DEL
You too. Give my best to
everybody you love. Hope someday
I can meet 'em.

Neal gives Del a bear hug and runs down the cars to an open door and disappears inside. Del waves to him.

178 INT. TRAIN. DAY

Neal slides into a seat. He breathes a huge sigh of relief.

NEAL
What a trip...

He reaches across the aisle and snares a discarded newspaper off the seat. He opens it. The train jolts ahead.

179 EXT. WILMETTE SUBWAY STATION. DAY

A neat little brick building in the sedate suburb. A taxi pulls away from the front.

180 EXT. STATION. DAY

The train pulls in. The doors open. Neal steps off the train and heads into the station. He's buried in his newspaper, reading as he walks.

180A INT. STATION. DAY

Neal pushes open the door and walks into the station. He's still reading the paper. Suddenly, he falls OUT OF FRAME.

CU. NEAL

He picks himself up off the floor and turns to see what he tripped over. He's startled.

HIS POV

Del's trunk.

CU. NEAL

He turns angrily

HIS POV

Del's sitting on a wooden bench. He smiles sheepishly and clears his throat.

DEL

Hi.

CU NEAL

He's dumbfounded.

NEAL

Del? What are you doing here?

INT. STATION

Del looks away. Neal walks over to him. Del looks up at him. He doesn't say anything.

NEAL

You said you were going to
Homewood. What're you doing here?

DEL

I don't live in Homewood.

NEAL

I'm not getting into this, Del.
I don't know what you're up to
but I'm going home.

Del nods. He's serious and somber. The old enthusiasm and
bullshit has evaporated. Neal heads to the doors. He
starts to exit. Stops. A long beat and he kicks the door.

NEAL

Goddamn it!

Del jumps from the sudden noise. Neal turns to him.

DEL

Go ahead, Neal. I'm sorry. I
shouldn't be here.

NEAL

You're right, Del. I don't know
what the deal is with you but you
oughta be home. I oughta be home.
I don't understand you. I don't
understand any of this. I've said
goodbye to you ten times in two
days.

DEL

I know. Go on home. I'm fine.

NEAL

Don't give me that shit, Del.
Why don't you go home?

Del looks at the floor.

NEAL

Huh?

Del doesn't answer.

NEAL

What's the matter with you? Why
the hell don't you go home?

Del looks up at him.

DEL

I can't.

NEAL

(loud and angry)
What do you mean, you can't? Why
not?

There's a long pause.

CU. DEL

Serious, dying inside.

CU. NEAL

Waits for a response. Holds his anger at bay.

CU. DEL

Looks away, looks back.

DEL

I don't have a home.

CU. NEAL

The anger fades. To be replaced by confusion.

CU. DEL

Looks at Neal. Sorry he's burdened him, sorry for
everything he's done. But lost and down and completely out
of emotional options.

DEL

Marie's been dead eight years.

CU. NEAL

Like a knife through his heart.

180B INT. TRAIN STATION. LATER

Del and Neal are sitting on facing benches. Del's smoking.

DEL

She was sick when we got married. She just never got better. Once she was gone, I sold the house. I didn't much feel like being there. My life was empty enough as it was. I couldn't handle the thought of rambling around the place without Marie there so I just closed it up, took a few things and I've been on the road ever since.

NEAL

The trunk?

Del reaches in his pocket and comes up with a key. He unlocks the trunk and opens it.

CU. TRUNK

The remnants of Del's domestic life. A lamp, some sheets, towels, pictures, a couple pans, fragile things wrapped in newspaper.

INT. STATION

Neal leans back from the trunk. He closes the lid.

DEL

I didn't have much family. A brother in Montana, some cousins. Marie's folks died back-to-back the year after we married. They were pretty old. She was a late child. We didn't get the chance to have kids. She wanted three. Two boys and a girl.

He smiles sadly.

DEL

I number about 300 motels as my home. I sort of attach myself to people from time to time. Like with you. Especially around the holidays. I can take it in March, July, October. I don't mind it. But it gets hard about this time of year.

(more)

DEL (Cont'd)

I've never had much of a chance to be a family man but it gets really hard. And you know what it is?

Neal shakes his head. He's about to cry.

DEL

I don't get to give any of myself to anybody. It's not the getting I miss, it's the giving. I sat on that plane with you and I thought about you heading home to be with your people. And Tuesday night when you were in the shower and I looked at the pictures of your kids, man, I thought you gotta be the luckiest man on Earth to go home and put those little guys on your knee and hug 'em and kiss 'em. I'm thirty nine years old and I never had that and I never will. I'm sorry about all this. I just kinda lost control this time. Every year since Marie's been gone, I've gotten closer and closer to losing it. Usually, I head for a church. I can feel like I'm part of something when I'm in a church. This time...I guess I didn't get to the church fast enough. I just couldn't let go.

He looks at his watch.

DEL

I vowed I'd never burden anybody with this. And I broke my vow, held you away from your family. I caused you a hell of alot of trouble. You better run.

Neal stares at the floor, devastated by Del's story.

DEL

I'm gonna head back downtown.

He stands up.

DEL

I know the firm you work for.
I read your business card.

(more)

DEL (Cont'd)

I've kept a sort of tab on what I owe you and I'll get it all back to you. And I just want to say, in fifteen years on the road, I never met a nicer guy than you.

He bends over and snaps the lock on the trunk.

DEL

And that comes straight from my heart. God bless you, buddy. A few more like you and the planet'd be in good shape.

He lifts one end of the trunk and picks up his suitcase and sample case.

DEL

When I give my thanks, it's gonna be for meeting you.

He starts to drag the trunk back to the platform. Neal looks up. Looks at Del.

NEAL

Same here.

Del stops. He looks back at Neal. Gives him a wink and continues across the station.

181 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET. HOUSE. DUSK

It's dark, cars are parked up and down both sides of the street. Lights are burning in a big, old two story colonial.

182 INT. HOUSE. FAMILY ROOM. NIGHT

The football game's just ended. Neal's father-in-law, Martin, and his father, Walt are in the family room watching the TV. A two year-old boy, SETH, is asleep in Walt's arms. A six year-old girl, MARTI, is on the floor combing her My Little Pony's hair. A five year-old boy, LITTLE NEAL, is sharing a chair with Martin.

MARTIN

I'm telling you, the Lions never fail to disappoint.

WALT

They won, for God's sake!

MARTIN

It was a squeaker, Walt. If they win it's always a squeaker.

182 CONTINUED:

182

LITTLE NEAL
What's a squeaker?

MARTIN
You just watched one.

LITTLE NEAL
I did? And I didn't know it?

LITTLE NEAL
What's a squeaker?

MARTIN
You just watched one.

LITTLE NEAL
I did? And I didn't know it?

183 INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Neal's wife, SUE, is finishing a relish tray. Her mother, JOY, is stirring gravy. And her mother-in-law, PEG, is whipping mashed potatoes with an egg beater.

SUE
For all I know, Neal could be splattered all over some highway somewhere.

Peg shuts off the egg beater. It's her son.

PEG
Are you just trying to upset me?

JOY
Of course not.
(to Sue)
Last time he called he said what?

SUE
He said he and this Del Griffith person were in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin...

PEG
Martin and I have friends in Oconomowoc, the Kudner's. Their boy's a state trouper.

SUE
I think he's full of crap. He said the rental car burned up. He said he got robbed. He and this Del Griffith.

JOY
Who's Del Griffith?

SUE
Some guy he met at the airport in New York.

Sue stops her work.

184 INT. HOUSE. FOYER. NIGHT

Little Neal's crossing the foyer heading for the dining room. Sue stomps in from the living room and heads up the stairs.

LITTLE NEAL
When are we going to eat?

SUE
Never!

LITTLE NEAL
Never? Never again?

The grandfathers come into the foyer from the living room, Joy and Peg come in from the dining room. Seth stumbles up to Walt and grabs his pant leg. Marti peaks through the grandpa's.

MARTIN
What's the fuss?

JOY
Sue's a little upset.

WALT
What's the problem?

MARTI
Because Daddy's not here?

JOY

I'll go have a word with her.
Why don't you all go sit down?

Joy starts for the stairs. The doorbell rings.

MARTIN

Who the heck's calling at this
hour on Thanksgiving?

Marti bursts through the grandpa's and charges to the door.
She grabs the knob with both hands and pulls it open.

MARTI

DADDY!

HER POV

Neal and Del Griffith are standing at the door holding the
trunk.

NEAL

Hi, sweetie!

INT. FOYER

Peg leans up the stairs and calls to Sue.

PEG

SUSAN! NEAL'S HOME!

INT. FOYER

Neal and Del lug the trunk into the house and set it down.
Neal closes the door.

NEAL

Did I miss the turkey?

LITTLE NEAL

We're never eating again.

NEAL

What?

MARTIN

What the hell happened to you
fellas?

NEAL

Dad, this is Del Griffith.
(to Del)
This is my Dad, Walt Page.

Del shakes Walt's hand. Neal introduces everybody to Del.
Del shakes hands all around.

DEL

It's been a long time since I sat
behind a turkey.

SUSAN

It might be a little done.

DEL

I want to thank you all for
letting me be a part of your
holiday. You'll never know how
much it means to me. I've always
had alot of things to be thankful
for. But never more than right
now.

NEAL

Same here, pal.

SUSAN

Marti? Do you want to say
something?

Marti looks at her for a moment. Susan nods to her, to
help her remember what she has to say.

MARTI

Oh, yeah.

(thinks)

Heap high the board with...What?

SUSAN

Plentious cheer.

MARTI

With plentious cheer. And gather
to the ...what?

SUSAN

Feast.

MARTI

Feast. And...

She thinks as hard as she can.

DEL

Toast the sturdy Pilgrim band...

MARTI

Toast the sturdy Pilgrim band...

MARTI AND DEL

...whose courage never ceased.

Everybody joins in.

DEL

It's been a long time since I sat behind a turkey.

SUSAN

It might be a little done.

DEL

I want to thank you all for letting me be a part of your holiday. You'll never know how much it means to me. I've always had alot of things to be thankful for. But never more than right now.

NEAL

Same here, pal.

SUSAN

Marti? Do you want to say something?

Marti looks at her for a moment. Susan nods to her, to help her remember what she has to say.

MARTI

Oh, yeah.

(thinks)

Heap high the board with...What?

SUSAN

Plentious cheer.

MARTI

With plentious cheer. And gather to the ...what?

SUSAN

Feast.

MARTI

Feast. And...

She thinks as hard as she can.

DEL

Toast the sturdy Pilgrim band...

MARTI

Toast the sturdy Pilgrim band...

MARTI AND DEL

...whose courage never ceased.

Everybody joins in.

ALL
Give praise to that Almighty
Gracious One...

188 INT. FOYER. NIGHT

We hold on the trunk sitting in the middle of the room as
the voices spill out from the dining room.

ALL
...by whom their steps were led,
And thanks unto the harvest's Lord
who sends our daily bread.

LITTLE NEAL
Amen.

DEL
Amen.

FADE DOWN. END TITLES

THE END